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ABSTRACT

This document consists of the eight issues of volumes 9 and 10 of a publication of the International Montessori Society providing news and information to extend awareness and interest in the application of Montessori educational principles and to promote harmony in the Montessori community. Regular sections in each issue provide information on training opportunities, teaching practices, relevant government legislation, editorials, positions available, and membership benefits. Each issue also highlights a special principle of Montessori education. (KB)

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International Montessori Society

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March, 1998

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The Montessori OBSERVER

BALANCE

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Left to right are H. Kent Baker, Ph.D., Jerry Duvall, Ph.D., and Lee Havis at meeting of IMAC Advisory Committee in January, 1998. Dr. Baker and Dr. Duvall are members of the Committee.

Institutions in Africa and Asia Seek IMAC Accreditation

Since December, 1997, the IMAC accrediting agency for Montessori teacher education has received two new applications for its accreditation. **Headstart Montessori Training Center** (*Lindsay Van den Berg, Director*) is located in Walvis Bay, Namibia, Africa and the other is **Montessori Creative World** (*Fan Shih Lan, Director*) in Singapore. IMAC has also received various other preliminary inquiries from several institutions in the United States interested in establishing accredited status with the agency.

On January 28, 1998, the IMAC Advisory Committee met in Silver Spring, MD to discuss these and other related matters. This six-member panel makes final decisions for all IMAC accreditation.

Lee Havis, IMAC director indicated that growing interest in the agency's accreditation is a hopeful development in many respects. He stated that "IMAC accreditation not only assures a process of better instruction and program operation of the institution, but it creates important relationships of mutual support and cooperation among the participating persons involved. This mutual cooperation helps to unify our efforts and create a more dignified and harmonious presentation of Montessori education before the general public."

Havis also noted the particular value of IMAC's broad, inclusive standards that aim to accommodate any institution which is seriously pursuing effective Montessori teacher preparation. An application and Administrative Manual (including essential standards) will be sent to any interested party upon written request to: IMAC, 912 Thayer Ave. #207, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Child working with practical life dressing frame at Fredericton Montessori School in New Brunswick, Canada.

Public Assembly Now a Political Action Committee

On January 14, 1998, the Central Committee of the Maryland Public Assembly (MPA) met to formalize itself as a "Political Action Committee" in the state of Maryland. This grassroots citizen organization is now qualified to receive and disburse funds for its planned endorsement and candidate support activities throughout the state.

At the January meeting, **James McLaughlin** of Prince George's County was elected treasurer. Mr. McLaughin has been active in managing campaign finances for various other political organizations and candidates in Maryland, and has been actively involved in the Assembly as a member for some time. As MPA officer, he will also serve as a member of the Assembly's state central committee.

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 3

Montessori School in New Brunswick, Canada

In September, 1997, **Mary Jane Henry** established a new Montessori school in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. Before establishing her *Fredericton Montessori School*, Ms. Henry had operated another Montessori school in Toronto, Ontario for eight years. She sold the prior school when she moved to New Brunswick.

The new Fredericton school is organized as a corporation, and includes a full-day and half-day Montessori program. Before and after school care is provided, as well as music, gymnastics and parent education.

Ms. Henry has stated her interest in working more closely with the Society in the future in the field of teacher education. She has therefore been in consultation with the Society about helping to support a suitable Montessori conference in Canada.

For further information, contact: Mary Jane Henry, Fredericton Montessori School, 749 Charlotte St., Fredericton, New Brunswick, E3B 1M6, Canada, tel. (506) 459-3955.

BALANCE

by Lee Havis

Living creatures create a universal balance. Intelligence, a balanced personality, and the unity of all mankind as a single organism are man's wealth".

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Education and Peace****, p.94-99*

Montessori teaching supports the development of a universal balance in the child's personality — a normalized way of being in harmony with its entire environment. However, our efforts for such a normalized balance in children are strongly opposed by many obstacles in society — forces and influences that distract and divert our attention away from the child's true nature of spontaneous self-discipline, attachment to reality and harmony with its entire environment. If we are to effectively create a proper environment for this normalized child to emerge, we must overcome this lack of balance in society which so fundamentally impinges on our Montessori teaching with children.

Lack of Balance

"...there exists a lack of balance between the miraculous progress of our environment and the arrest of development suffered by man."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Formation of Man****, p.14*

Our modern age reflects a striking lack of balance between the progress of science and the considerable poverty of our moral, spiritual and character development. While we invest enormous time, money and attention in public education to correct this critical imbalance, it remains deeply rooted and well-established in the human personality. Montessori education seeks to resolve this lack of balance by supporting the development of the whole child — including its deepest levels of spiritual life.

Spiritual Life

"We have been mistaken in thinking that the natural education of children should be purely physical, the soul, too, has its nature, which is intended to perfect in the spiritual life."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Montessori Method****, p.374*

Montessori teaching differs significantly from conventional education in its commitment to the spiritual, as well as the physical and intellectual development of the child. Whereas conventional education is limited primarily to academic progress, Montessori education recognizes the vital need for nurturing the child's spiritual life as well. Such an holistic approach to the child overcomes the ordinary differences between home and school — creating a unity of conception that is not generally present in conventional education.

Unity of Conception

"The human personality, or the care of it, is broken up. One the one side is the home... on the other side is the school... There is no unity of conception."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Absorbent Mind****, p.13*

The concept of ordinary education is bound within the confines of its curriculum mandates — a system of teacher-imposed group instruction, grades and separated subject matter which substantially disregards the needs and interests of the individual child. By contract, Montessori supports each child to follow its own "teacher within" — a commitment to help the child balance all aspects of its spiritual, mental and physical life. Such a unifying concept of education follows a process of self-discovery that requires a considerable inner preparation on the part of the teacher.

Inner Preparation

"One who would become a teacher according to our system must examine himself...this inner preparation will give the balance and pose he will need."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Secret of Childhood****, p.153*

Montessori teaching is always seeking out the visionary normalized child that lives in the realm of the spirit — a process of inner preparation which must constantly balance such natural laws as (1) "*Observation*"; (3) "*Individual Liberty*" and (3) "*Preparation of the Environment*". Following these three fundamental Montessori principles, the teacher must determine precisely when and how to "control the environment, not the child". She must remove its various detrimental influences from around each individual child in the group by carefully shaping the environment.

Shaping the Environment

"A child slowly perfects his activities. An adult can assist in shaping the environment, but it is the child that perfects his own being."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Secret of Childhood****, p.195*

The principle "*Preparation of the Environment*" guides us to create a positive, orderly condition for the child's normal self-directed learning. The Montessori teacher must particularly control her own personality in the environment — to effectively regulate its impact and influence on the child. This new Montessori concept of indirect education must carefully balance the level of stimulation in the environment with the emerging true needs and interests of each individual child.

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 2

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Lee Havis, Executive Director

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Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

Sneaky and Destructive

In this *moment of peril*, the teacher has become frustrated with the sneaky and destructive behavior of three year old Jason (see ***Observer***, *November, 1997*). She cannot understand why he consistently denies or avoids any responsibility for his prior harmful actions.

The teacher seeks to *"control the environment, not the child"*, but she cannot so easily control the objects that have already been damaged or taken by the child. So, it is primarily the teacher's own "personality" which must be controlled in this situation.

In dealing with sneaky, destructive behavior, there is a tendency to blame and accuse the child — so the natural reaction of the child is to lie or otherwise avoid and resist the teacher's inquiries. The teacher must therefore avoid any provocative negative or accusatory comments in her conversation with Jason on these matters.

While the teacher can certainly inquire with Jason about missing objects, as to "where they are" or how to repair some damage that he might have caused in the past, it is important that this be done in a positive, non-threatening manner. Ultimately, however, the solution here is to observe Jason's behavior more closely — to better control the "adult personality" with positive communication to support his more normal behavior in the future.

The teacher must now also recognize that Jason needs more attentive observation — to interrupt his wandering mind and tendency towards fantasy with a warm and friendly glance or invitation to work. Her gentle communication and practical life lessons with Jason will gradually lead him towards a more responsible normal way of being in the environment.

Bored

4 year old Brian claims to be "bored" when the teacher interrupts his distracted fantasy play with some invitation for goal-directed work in the environment. He responds with indifference to these invitations — and the teacher has become quit frustrated with the challenge to interest him in anything. His mother has also told the teacher that he has expressed his boredom at school to her. *What to do?*

*Answer in May, 1998, **Observer***

BALANCE

Cont'd. from Page 2, Col. 3

Concept of Education

"Our concept of education of children thus differs not only from those who do everything for a child themselves but also from those who think that they can have the child in a purely passive environment."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Secret of Childhood**, p.198*

Montessori education centers itself on a concept of the child as growing in independence, self-directed learning and harmony with others. The teacher must therefore adapt to these changing needs by modifying and regulating her initial active presence in the environment — moving towards a more inactive role as the child assumes more independence in its own self-directed activity. The three Montessori principles are always available to help balance the activity of the teacher.

Activity of the Teacher

"...the more the environment corresponds to the needs of the child, the more limited becomes the activity of the teacher."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **The Child**, p.9*

The Montessori teacher applies the principle of "Observation" to decide when and how to adjust and control her activity with children. She must notice the first delicate signs of a child concentrating on some object of interest — to then restrain any of her activity which might distract or interrupt the child in this critical moment of development. At some particular moment of profound concentration, the child develops a critical inner equilibrium in its entire personality — signaling the beginning of a new path of "normalized" development in harmony with cosmic laws of the universe.

Equilibrium

"...the completion of an entire cycle (of work) will exercise an influence more and more far-reaching on the personality of the child ..it is from the completed cycles of activity...that the child develops equilibrium..."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Spontaneous Act. In Ed.**, p.105*

The child acquires a normal state of internal equilibrium by completing cycles of concentrated work — goal-directed activity which may involve many repetitions of the same simple movement and exercise. The child then becomes "normalized" to bring its whole life and being into complete balance with the order of nature. Then we can see the wonderful harmony of the normalized child as it expresses itself through many forms of constructive activity in the environment.

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 1

Book Review

Practical Life Catalogs

Ed. Note: The Society often receives inquiries about materials for the Montessori environment. The most basic of these relate to the simple exercises of "practical life". One well-known practical life catalog is featured here.

Montessori Services

A Resource for Preparing the Child's Environment

The 1997-98 catalog of this company includes some 67 pages of materials and equipment which have particular application to the practical life area of the Montessori environment. Included are products for such ordinary exercises as pouring, washing, sorting and cleaning — as well as other related areas of the curriculum relating to language, geography, music and art .

Jane Campbell, head of *Montessori Services*, has worked for more than 20 years to compile a comprehensive inventory of the most useful, hard-to-find practical life materials — to help teachers and parents equip their environment in a suitable manner for a young child's normal growth and development. Her annual catalog always seems to and expand in its scope and improve in its quality of presentation. Along with a picture and description of each specific material, this publication provides a brief description of its particular use and value in Montessori teaching.

The *Montessori Services* catalog is provided free to students in the Society's Montessori teacher education program, and can also be obtained free from the company itself. An order form is included in the catalog to facilitate purchase of listed products by mail order, phone or fax. For more information, contact: *Montessori Services*, 836 Cleveland Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95401, tel. 707-579-3003, FAX 1-800-483-9822
e-mail: monserv@sonic.net

PUBLIC ASSEMBLY

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 3

Lee Havis, MPA chairperson, believes that the Assembly can help improve the conditions for Montessori education in the state — by helping those public interest candidates who are more likely to be receptive to responsive government and basic individual freedoms in society. He states that "our platform emphasizes greater freedom for the operation of non-public education, and we will certainly raise these issues in our endorsement procedures with candidates, and in our public information to voters as well."

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 3

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BALANCE

Cont'd from Page 3, Col. 3

A Wonderful Harmony

"If one pulls in a given direction, there will always be another which pulls the opposite way...a wonderful harmony between opposing forces."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Absorbent Mind****, p.143*

The wonderful harmony of normalized children will certainly not conform with the ordinary disorder and deceit of ordinary society — but may at times strikingly conflict with others in a manner that seems quite dissonant. However, this dissonance is an important outward expression of a fundamental inner creative change in the human personality, which is bringing into the world a much higher level of order and peace for all humanity. Montessori teachers serve this higher purpose through their common effort with the child's own true nature and instincts.

A Common Effort

"In order to re-establish that proper balance, mankind makes a common effort."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Education and Peace****, p.100*

Montessori teaching ultimately works in harmony with others for the emergence of a new and better humanity in the world — a common effort for the normalized child which expresses itself beyond the classroom in many diverse and intricate ways. We each play a unique and distinctive role in this evolving work of creating the *new education* — an interrelated functioning in society which is more than just meeting our physical needs for food, shelter and clothing. Beyond the physical plane of existence, our purpose in Montessori teaching serves a higher purpose for the benefit of all — to realize the universal cosmic balance of the new normalized child in the world

Marketplace

Montessori Teachers

Teaching opportunities exist in private American and international schools around the world. The Educational Staffing program of International Schools Services has placed K-12 teachers and administrators in overseas schools since 1955. Most candidates obtain their overseas teaching positions by attending our U.S.-based International Recruitment Centers (IRCs) where ISS candidates have the potential to interview with overseas school heads seeking new staff. You must be an active ISS candidate to attend an IRC. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree and two years of current relevant experience. IRC registration materials are provided upon approval of your completed ISS application. For more information, please view our web site at www.iss.edu, or contact us at: International Schools Services, PO Box 5910, Princeton, NJ 08543, Tel. 609-452-0990, Fax: 609-452-0990, E-mail: edustaffing@iss.edu

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PUBLIC ASSEMBLY

Cont'd from Page 3, Col. 3

Current plans for the Assembly include a voter registration drive — to help qualify voters to participate in the election process. Havis states that this effort will bring greater public exposure to the work of the Assembly. It will also inform and encourage voters as to their important role in electing public interest candidates in the state.

In November, 1998, the next general election will be held in Maryland, and the entire state legislature will be up for election. Havis states that he hopes the Assembly will be prepared to make endorsements and support suitable candidates at that time.

Positions & Placements

Montessori Administrators: required qualifications include Montessori diploma and master's degree. Hold or be eligible for Missouri Certification in elementary school administration and teaching. Five (5) years Montessori classroom experience. Also, **elementary Montessori teachers**. Fax a cover letter, resume (with Social Security Number) and copies of certification to 816-418-7712 or mail Attn.: Human Resources, 1211 McGee, Kansas City, MO 64106 or call 816-418-7706 for application. Job Hotline 816-419-7703.

Montessori Administrator: Milwaukee Montessori School seeks HEAD OF SCHOOL for year-round comprehensive program for ages 2 to 14 to begin June, 1998. Seeking a strong candidate with Montessori training and administrative experience. M.A. preferred. Reply to: Elizabeth A. Montavon, Ph.D., MMS Search Committee, 4610 West State Street, Milwaukee, WI 53226 FAX 414-259-0427 E-Mail montavon@execpc.com

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Montessori Regulations in Maryland and Virginia

Free Competition vs. Censorship

An interesting contrast of philosophy appears in the regulation of Montessori education in the two states which border the US capital city of Washington, DC. Whereas Virginia regulations are being revised to allow more flexibility and free competition, Maryland regulations aim towards the approach of censorship.

Virginia

On February 28, 1998, the Virginia Child Day Care Council approved new regulations that would eliminate all prior reference to "Montessori" as a special category for treatment within its regulations. This change conforms with the recommendations made by the Society and others — to create a more fair, open and impartial regulation of Montessori schools in that state.

Lee Havis, Society executive director, indicated that "these changes will considerable enhance free competition among the full range of available alternatives in the field — a very constructive change for the progress and growth of Montessori education in this state".

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 3

Children engaged in practical life work at La Casa Montessori (Annapolis, MD)

Basement Montessori in Annapolis, Maryland

In Annapolis, MD, **Alethea Hession** (IMS '87) has organized a type of "basement Montessori" with a small group of other interested parents in the area. Known as *La Casa Montessori*, this unique program provides a cost-effective and valuable learning experience for all participating parents and children in the group.

The group meets together two mornings per week in a basement floor room of one of the parents. The Montessori environment is created there, which includes the provision of suitable materials and furniture. A special feature of the program is its bi-lingual nature, blending the Spanish and English languages in all aspects of its operation.

A trained Montessori parent supervises the program and one or two other parents attend as assistants. Mandatory monthly meetings provide the parents with a workshop on applying Montessori principles, as well as an occasion to organize specific field trips to places of interest in the area.

At their most recent meeting, the parents indicated an interest in scheduling a Society "*Creating the New Education*" conference in the Annapolis area. Attending the meeting also was Lee Havis, IMS director, who expressed his support for this event which has now been set for the weekend of September 26-27, 1998. He indicated that this first Maryland Montessori conference would parallel the format of those that had gone before elsewhere since 1986. Registration is open to all those interested in learning more about Montessori teaching — regardless of background or specific experience.

If you are interested in learning more about *La Casa Montessori*, or would be interested in starting a "basement Montessori" program of your own, contact: Alethea Hession at 410-849-3342.

Reflections...

Inner Preparation on Line

by Mona Shelton (Washington, NC)

***Mona Shelton** reflects here on her experience of an on-line computer discussion list about Montessori — as it arose in a specific interaction with **Lee Havis**, Society executive director. Both are active participants on the list which is sometimes very much an on-line inner preparation.*

I have noticed as I've moved through my years that sometimes the people who "raise my hackles" at first are those from whom I will learn the most. Usually this isn't apparent in the beginning ~ after a few contacts with such a person, I usually cut off contact and never have the chance to move forward. Occasionally the situation will continue to put me in the company of these people and more often than by chance the reasons for my initial discomfort becomes apparent. I think that's what happened with you. Your ideas are usually plainly and strongly presented.

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 3

MONTESSORI CONFERENCE

Creating the New Education

Inner Preparation for Montessori teaching

The Society's two-day weekend conference, "*Creating the New Education*" provides a psychological "inner preparation" for Montessori teaching — in-depth study and experience in applying Montessori principles with children.

Annapolis, Maryland

September 26-27, 1998

Register by July 26, 1998

Member rate — $130 per person

Call or write for details

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ACTION

by Lee Havis

"...it is not the truth itself that has value, but the man who is capable of appreciating it and bringing it into relation with action."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Spontaneous Act. in Ed**., p.223*

Montessori teaching puts into action a commitment to the child's true nature — the new "normalized" child with its spontaneous self-discipline, precocious intelligence, order and complete harmony with the entire environment. Unless we act in some tangible outward manner for this *normalized* child, our mere words, beliefs or agreement with this visionary truth will have no effect at all in reality. The type of committed action needed for this new educational approach is, however, very different from the ordinary behavior of traditional teaching.

Different Type of Action

"It verily seems as if one has to have a seal of virtues, but it is not so, it is but a different type of action that is required."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Voice***, 21 Jan. 1942, p.9*

Montessori teaching follows the path of commitment to such fundamental principles of nature as (1) "*Observation*"; (2) "*Individual Liberty*" and (3) "*Preparation of the Environment*" — a very different type of action from the ordinary way of reacting, controlling and manipulating children in conventional education. Montessori teachers must act at times in a very contrary manner to the comfortable habits, feelings and thoughts which have been fixed in our personality since childhood. The activity of the teacher must reflect instead a way of being committed to the three Montessori principles — constantly adapting to the changing needs and interests of each child's own evolving plan of creation.

Activity of the Teacher

"...the more the environment corresponds to the needs of the child, the more limited becomes the activity of the teacher."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **The Child**, p.9*

The principle "*Preparation of the Environment*" teaches us to *control the environment, not the child* — to remove those various obstacles which interfere with the child's true normal development. The activity of the teacher must therefore change from an initial outgoing and directive presence, to one of a more passive way of being — to observe the children as they freely pursue their own independent learning in the environment. Montessori teaching always looks to the individual child, not the adult, as the primary active being and source of the child's education.

Active Being

"The commonest prejudice in ordinary education is that everything can be accomplished by talking...or by holding oneself up as a model to be imitated...The child is usually considered a receptive being instead of an active being."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Absorbent Mind**, p.254*

Ordinary teaching treats the child essentially as a receptive, passive object — repressing its normal spontaneous expression through such means as group instruction, grades and teacher-controlled curriculum. By contrast, Montessori education views the child as having its own inner guidance — a "teacher within" who provides the true authority and direction for its proper course of action. The adult's role in this new educational approach to the child is therefore rather indirect and supportive — to allow the child's own nature to fully emerge of itself.

Child's Own Nature

"...there was no method to be seen, what was seen was a child...acting according to its own nature."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Secret of Childhood**, p.136*

"*Observation*" as a Montessori principles teaches us to view the child as an unknown entity which will reveal its own nature through various forms of outward physical activity. Montessori teachers particularly look for a profound moment of concentration with some object of interest — the pivotal "normalization" event which signals the beginning of a whole new path of stable, orderly development thereafter. This new *normalized* way of being emerges spontaneously from mysterious internal activities within the child itself.

Internal Activities

"...internal activities act as cause; they do not react and exist as the effect of external factors. Our attention is not arrested on all things indifferently, but by those which are congenial to our tastes."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Spontaneous Act. in Ed**., p.160*

Internal activity in the child, associated with fundamental tendencies, instincts and interests given by nature, emerge in many forms of exploration and experimentation in the environment. Montessori teachers must support these delicate inner formations, by offering lessons in the use and handling of different objects of interest to the child. Such lessons must particularly respect the child's first vital instinct towards independent activity.

Child's First Instinct

"The child's first instinct is to carry out his actions by himself, without anyone helping him..."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Absorbent Mind**, p.90-91*

Dr. Montessori observed that independent action is a fundamental drive in the young child — to manage its own problems of everyday life entirely by itself.

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 2

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Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

BORED

When 4 year old Brian claims to be 'bored' in a Montessori environment (**see *Observer*, *March, 1998***), he is reflecting unnormalized behavior which calls for some form of teacher action to *"control the environment, not the child"*. The essential cause of the boredom here lies in the detrimental influence of the teacher's "personality".

Although the teacher has offered suggestions for work, the child has failed to show interest. So, the teacher must restructure her verbal communication with the child — to shift the focus of attention from the teacher's ideas and suggestions for work, to a thinking involvement of the child himself.

The teacher should therefore ask questions designed to stimulate some thinking in the child; e.g., "what work would you like to do?". If the child persists with "I don't know" type responses, offer some more specific hints and clues; e.g., "what things do you like to do at home?"; "Can you thing about something you enjoyed doing before?" A friendly conversation about where and when the child is 'not bored', might help to bring a resolution to the situation.

The teacher might also have the child think about his interests in a more structured manner; e.g., to sit quietly, close his eyes and imagine something to do that would be interesting. Once the child has identified some interest or idea, the teacher should then respond by providing the needed materials or information for the child's return to normal work in the environment.

Discouraged and Frustrated

5 year old Jeremy has recently entered the class — showing a pattern of extreme discouragement and frustration in all his actions. The teacher has tried to encourage Jeremy with positive words and invitations to work. But, he remains inattentive and distracted by the slightest noise — somber and sullen in his attitude of discouragement and frustration about everything around him. The teacher recognizes that Jeremy's mother has an extremely negative and judgmental manner at home. However, the mother has not changed her behavior, despite the teacher's frequent efforts to clarify the situation. What to do?

Answer in September, 1998 Observer

ACTION

Cont'd. from Page 2, Col. 3

Montessori teachers must therefore patiently show the child how to handle materials for such activities as carrying, ordering, dressing, pouring and cleaning — basic skills of practical life which are responsive to the child's particular needs and interests of the moment. The teacher must then follow up these practical life lessons to assure that the actions of the child's muscles are effectively guided by a primary goal-directed purpose.

Actions of the Muscles

"Mental work should be accompanied ...by movements which bring ideas into play and leave their traces on the external world...The actions of the muscles should always be at the service of the mind."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Discovery of the Child**, p.78*

The principle "*Individual Liberty*" directs us to provide the young child with many opportunities for free action and movement in the environment — to exert its muscles for some useful mental purpose. Such goal-directed work helps to integrate physical movement and sensorial experiences — to build up the child's inner mental order and form its entire essential personality. Dr. Montessori referred to this normal spontaneous activity of the child as "work", and its underlying cause as the "Horme".

The Horme

"Another vital factor of the mind is the urge to carry out an action to completion...called by psychologists the Horme..."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **To Ed. the Hum. Potential**, p.21*

The "Horme" motivates the child towards completing various cycles of external activity — work which is most essential for normal mental development during the formative period of early childhood. Montessori teaching supports this vital developmental function by allowing the child to freely work with various objects and exercises of interest. However, the teacher must not confuse the child's real work with the foolish action of the unnormalized child.

Foolish Action

"The foolish act is multiplied in the group. In a crowd, the spirit of imitation spreads and enhances individual defects."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Absorbent Mind**, p.267*

The foolish action of a child may disturb the work of others or direct itself to some fantasy make-believe use of materials — a distraction and deviation from the proper purpose of physical movement in the child. Whatever its form, the

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 1

Book Review

Practical Life Catalogs

Ed. Note: The Society often receives inquiries about materials for children in the Montessori environment. One well-known practical life catalog is featured here.

The Joyful Child

Michael Olaf's Essential Montessori for Birth to Three

Publ. by: The Michael Olaf Company
Copyright 1997, price $5.00 ea.

This catalog is directed primarily to the practical life needs of the infant and young child. Edited by **Jim Stephenson**, it has been revised in various forms over the years, to reflect the growing need for a materials guide and source of products for use with the very young.

The *Joyful Child* includes 52 pages of pictures and descriptions of materials which are divided into various interest areas, e.g., Prenatal, The First Year, The Second Year — Working with My Family, the Third Year — Culture and Language, The Third Year — Science and Math. Each section includes a summary commentary on various philosophical aspects of the particular subject matter and specific materials.

For further information, contact: The Michael Olaf Company, P.O. Box 1162, Arcata, CA 95518 USA, tel. (707) 826-1557. Toll Free FAX (800) 429-8877. Email: Michaelola@aol.com

Montessori Regulations

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 1

Maryland

On February 24, 1998, Lee Havis represented the Society before the Maryland Sate Board of Education — to speak out against their adoption of more restrictive regulations which would require government interpretation of written curriculum, qualifications of teachers, instructional methods, materials and other intimate aspects of a Montessori school.

Havis stated that "Montessori education cannot effectively survive and expand where government officials decide what is or is not authentic 'Montessori' — and then prohibit or allow the operation of schools based on their judgment. Private organization, such as IMS and the IMAC accrediting agency are available to give the general public proper guidance and recognition in the field. I believe that free competition and choice, not government censorship, is a better philosophy to follow to assure real quality in Montessori education."

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May, 1998
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ACTION

Cont'd from Page 3, Col. 3

teacher must interrupt such unnormalized behavior — to help return the child to a normal state of work and harmony with the environment. Such interruption aims to resolve the disturbing activity of children with positive action consistent with Montessori principles.

Disturbing Activity

"If...there is some child who persistently annoys the others, the most practical thing to do is to interrupt him — to break the flow of disturbing activity. The interruption may take the form of any kind of explanation, or in showing a special and affectionate interest in the troublesome child."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Absorbent Mind**, p.278-79*

Montessori teaching has a clear role and responsibility to apply the principle "*Preparation of the Environment*" — to remove the detrimental influences in the child's environment that are causing the particular disturbing activity. Sometimes, the most effective action is to distract "other children" away from the troublesome child, or to simply engage the misbehaving child in some friendly conversation about something elsewhere in the environment. In these critical moments of peril, our positive action counts most — to return the child to normal goal-directed activity.

Action Counts

"To think and wish is not enough. It is action which counts."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Spontaneous Act. in Ed.**, p.171*

Some form of action is always necessary in Montessori teaching, since we cannot simply remain passive and inert in the face of the many obstacles that ordinarily disturb the normal growth of children. Whatever mistakes or errors we may make in our actions with children, study and learning more about the three Montessori principles will help us control our detrimental tendencies and correct our erroneous actions — to direct us again to the path of true Montessori teaching. This is how our committed action for the *normalized* child works to bring the reality of the *new education* into the world.

Voice* refers to ***Voice of Dr. Maria Montessori*, Lectures Madras, India, 1941-42. *Publ. by Joy Hardinge*

Marketplace

FOR SALE: One classroom of well-cared-for primary Montessori equipment and furniture. Neinhuis and Gonzaga materials. Inventory available. Mary Lou Lentz, 701 W. 21st., Hutchinson, KS 67502, Tel. 1-316-663-1059. Leave message.

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Positions & Placements

Montessori Teacher/Directress: Looking for self-motivated, dedicated Montessorian to work in small mountain community school. Must have a minimum of 5 years experience. Send resume to: Telluride Montessori School, P.O. 365, Telluride CO 81435

Reflections

Cont'd from Page 1, Col. 2

You have touched nerves ~ nerves that have not been touched by any other. At first this raises defenses, but in this wonderful medium (on-line discussion list), the ability to fade into the background and then LISTEN, has afforded me an opportunity to look into what you are saying and most importantly, look into MYSELF and my relationship with my work and my classroom. I've been delving deeply (again) into Maria's writings to try to find just where you are "coming from." Almost every time I DO find that you are stating a purely Montessori idea... unfettered by modern politics.

Thank you for your input ~ I've learned that your well is deep and you have done a wonderful job in the past week or so maintaining kindness in the face of much dissension.

*There is no cost to joining the on-line Montessori discussion — just a computer with internet access. The discussion list is managed by **Sonja Buelman**.*

To subscribe, Send e-mail to LISTSERV@LISTSERV.AOL.COM *with the command* SUBSCRIBE MONTESSORI-L, *followed by your name in the body of the message*

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The Montessori OBSERVER

MORALITY

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Child working on trinomial cube at Mrs. Ronda's Montessori school

Mrs. Ronda's Montessori School in Huntsville, Alabama

Ronda Penuel established her Montessori school in Huntsville, Alabama in September, 1978 — to make her own uniquely personal contribution to the work of the *new education*. Before 1978, she had been teaching in several area Montessori schools.

Mrs. Ronda's Montessori School includes an extended day and a half-day program for children 2½ through 7 years of age, with Art, music, French, and computers provided to assist in broadening the program. Ronda states that "there is always something exciting and enriching going on in the classrooms! Currently we are observing the metamorphosis of the butterfly, as we watch Painted Lady butterflies emerge from their chrysalis!"

Mrs. Penuel is particularly proud of the diversity of the school curriculum, its staff and enrollment. As a Montessori school recognized with the Society, it is committed to operate according to specific written standards. She states that "one of the things that attracted me to IMS is their broad, inclusive standards and their interest in cohesion of the many Montessori entities."

For further information, contact: Ronda Penuel, *Mrs. Ronda's Montessori School*, 3102 Leeman Ferry Rd., Huntsville, AL 35801, Tel. (205) 883-5888.

Public Assembly Endorses Candidates in Maryland

In July and August, 1998, the *Maryland Public Assembly* has been conducting various endorsement sessions through that state — applying Montessori principles in the field of politics, to help voters identify candidates who best reflect the broad public interest of the people of Maryland. A platform of issues has been developed to guide this process "to expand awareness and inquiry into matters of significant concern to the general public and to form a basis for the evaluation and endorsement of candidates."

Organized in March, 1997, this grassroots, non-partisan citizen organization is open to all persons of voting age in the state. The essential aims are to preserve and protect individual liberty and self-governing democracy, to assure efficiency

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col 2

IMAC Progress Update

On June 2-3, 1998, the IMAC Board of Directors met in Silver Spring, MD to discuss progress in the agency's work of improving the quality of Montessori teacher education. **Sharmini DeZylva** from Sri Lanka attended with **Lee Havis**, director of IMS. At this time, the Accreditation Committee and Generic Review Committee also met to consider various issues concerning the approval of self-study reports from programs in Washington State, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Namibia, Africa.

At the June meeting, Lee Havis, IMAC Chairperson, also indicated his intention to continue speaking out for fairness in the government recognition of accrediting agencies. He reported that he had submitted written comments to the US Department of Education on this matter, and plans to appear before a hearing where this issue will be raised later in the year.

Havis also indicated his efforts to gain IMAC recognition with other government agencies — to establish its accreditation as a basis for quality assurance of Montessori teacher education with the general public, as widely as possible throughout the world.

For more information about IMAC and its accreditation standards, contact: IMAC, 912 Thayer Ave., #207, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

MONTESSORI CONFERENCE

Creating the New Education

Inner Preparation for Montessori teaching

Annapolis, Maryland

September 26-27, 1998

The Society's two-day weekend conference, "*Creating the New Education*" provides a psychological "inner preparation" for Montessori teaching — in-depth study and experience in applying Montessori principles with children.

Watch for summary of proceedings in "November Observer

MORALITY

by Lee Havis

"When we occupy ourselves with the 'moral education' of our children, we ought to ask ourselves if we really love them and if we are sincere in our wishes for their 'morality'."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Spontaneous Act. n Ed***, *p 288*

Morality is a necessary element of any educational approach to the child — a basic value system of right and wrong that is vital to any group learning experience. Montessori education teaches such morality indirectly through the adult's commitment to such natural laws as (1) "*Observation*", (2) "*Individual Liberty*" and (3) "*Preparation of the Environment*". These three fundamental laws of nature can help us considerably in applying the basic moral principle of respect for others in a group.

Basic Moral Principle

"The responsibility for one's actions represent collective efforts. The basic moral principle requires a commitment from the individual, the commitment of the individual to the group."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***From Child. to Adolescence***, *p 19*

Morality implies a certain balance of our own personal needs, interests and actions with those of others — to reconcile the "individual liberty" of one with the total interrelated harmony of all. In Montessori education, this basic moral principle helps guide each child to naturally adapt to the necessary order and good functioning of the whole. By contrast, the ordinary moral organization of the school is centered not on such a natural adaptation to order and harmony with others, but rather on the teacher's overriding need and purpose to impose a prescribed curriculum on all.

Moral Organization of the School

"Prizes and punishment ... are exponents of the moral organization of the school... it is the moral purpose to accustom children to 'suffer'."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Spontaneous Act. in Ed***, *p 315*

Traditional education judges children as either right or wrong, good or bad, according to their obedience to the absolute authority and control of the teacher. Such a dictatorial moral organization tends to manipulate and control the child through various forms of rewards, punishment, grades, rules and tests. Although this type of educational approach may include certain moral codes for proper behavior, even the very best of classroom rules cannot overcome a fundamental lack of character development that has occurred before in the formative period of early childhood.

Moral Codes

"We cannot become moral by committing codes and their application to memory, for memory might fail us a thousand times, and the slightest passion might overcome us."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Spontaneous Act. in Ed***, *p 326*

The teacher can humiliate, blame or shame the child through moral codes and classroom rules — but she cannot assure a true natural growth of morality within the child. In Montessori education, the young child spontaneously adapts to the patterns of proper social behavior by observing the example of the teacher and other children. This is a very different kind of education from the ordinary adult-controlled approach of traditional teaching with children.

Different Kind of Education

"...if character were allowed its natural way of formation, and if we gave not moral dissertation but the chance to act constructively, then the world would need a very different kind of education."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Absorbent Mind***, *p 214*

Montessori teaching follows such principles as "individual liberty" — to allow each child to develop its own morality in harmony with the group. Here, the adult seeks to create a positive, supportive environment where each child can express its own normal moral instincts towards prudence, dignity, trust, reliability and sympathy for others. The child's own internal sense of right and wrong is thereby allowed to establish itself as a stable aspect of its whole personality.

Internal Sense

"...normal persons, although entirely ignorant of the laws never transgress them, owing to an internal sense which guides them."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Spontaneous Act. in Ed***, *p 326*

Nature provides us all with an internal sense of right and wrong — a "conscience" which can guide us towards ethical decision-making in all areas of life. This inner moral compass normally begins to develop as an integral aspect of our character in early childhood, and forms the basis for all normal social behavior thereafter. True morality is therefore not brought about by rules and lectures, but rather by addressing the question of life that develops within the child from the moment of conception.

Question of Life

"...the moral question is a question of life, a question of 'nature', and one which cannot be solved by external eventualities."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Spontaneous Act. in Ed***, *p 322*

Children tend to learn morality through their everyday experiences with others — to choose what is good over what is evil as a matter of logic and common sense. Good behavior tends to reward us with true inner peace and social harmony, while the alternative brings only short term or illusory benefits at best. Montessori teaching therefore follows a natural path of moral education from within the child, by offering many opportunities for the child's free choice and self-directed social interaction with others.

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Lee Havis, Executive Director

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Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

Discouraged and Frustrated

5 year old Jeremy is frustrated and discouraged (**see *Observer***, *May, 1998*), objecting to any invitation or suggestion to work by the teacher. He quickly tires of his own activity, and turns to disturbing the work of others. The teacher must nonetheless apply the approach of *"control the environment, not the child"* as best she can — to overcome a considerable pattern of negativity in Jeremy which has been built up in the relationship with his mother from home.

In this "*moment of peril*", the teacher's "*personality*" must be more carefully controlled — to remove its detrimental influences from Jeremy's environment. Jeremy's discouragement and frustration is really that of the teacher in projected form — and so she must act with greater persistence to restrain any of her own negative speech or action with Jeremy. She must persist in her positive, encouraging communication with Jeremy at every opportunity.

With the mother, the teacher should make a special effort each day to say something positive and encouraging about Jeremy's progress towards normalization — even if the success is only some brief moment of attention or self-directed activity with the most simple of practical life activities. In time, this path of encouragement, positive communication and faith in Jeremy's true nature will result in his concentrated work and normalization in the environment.

Picking, Poking and Pushing

3 year old Richard is inattentive about his hands, which seem to be constantly poking, pushing and picking at the furniture, carpet and materials in the classroom. The teacher feels like saying "hands off" to Richard almost all the time — to preserve and protect the beauty and function of the physical environment. Instead, however, she tries to interest Richard in some constructive practical life activity to do with his hands. However, Richard usually declines any invitation to work — as he returns to his thoughtless and destructive picking, poking and pushing with his hands.
What to do?

Answer in Observer, November, 1998

Morality

Cont'd. from Page 2, Col. 3

Moral Education

"It is at seven years that one may note the beginning of an orientation towards moral questions, toward the judgment of acts...the great problem of Good and Evil now confronts him...The seven to 12 year old period, then constitutes one of particular importance for moral education."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **From Child. to Adolescence**, p.5*

While the young child develops itself primarily by working with physical objects, the older child seeks out a more abstract and social form of moral education. The Montessori elementary environment therefore allows children to identify and solve various moral problems through suitable discussion, abstract reasoning and consensus rule-making among themselves. The teacher helps this self-directed moral development by giving children work that will stimulate and encourage their own further independent research and study into the many perplexing practical aspects of social behavior.

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 1

Public Assembly

Cont'd. from Page 1,Col. 2

and integrity in the operation of government and to support free enterprise and fair business practices for all.

Prior to each endorsing session, candidates were qualified for consideration by submitting a questionnaire with information about their background and issues relating to Budget, Taxes and Resources, Electoral/Political Reform, Education, Environment and Human Resources. Members were then able to review these questionnaires, and engage in a back and forth discussion with the candidates or their representatives at each of several endorsing sessions held around the state.

Final endorsements were made as follows: **United States** [*U.S. Senate*] Kenneth Wayman; **Baltimore County** [*House of Delegates*], *District 6*, Timothy Knepp; **Frederick County** [*State Senate*] *District 3*, Alex S. Mooney; **Montgomery County** [*State's Attorney*] Douglas Gansler; [*County Council*] *at Large*, Blair Ewing, Isiah Leggett, *District 4* William Patton, *[Democratic Central Committee]*, Alvin Rivera, [*House of Delegates*] *District 19*, Barney Evans, *District 20*, James Harrison, *District 39*, Patricia Cummings; **Prince George's County** [*County* Council] District 8, Zalee Harris, [*House of Delegates*], *District 21*, Frances Shellenberger, *District 23*, Shukoor Ahmed.

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 3

Book Review

New Introduction for Montessori Classic

Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work
by E.M. Standing, *Publ. Plume, 1998 ed.*

The 1998 edition of the Montessori classic, *Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work* (E.M. Standing) includes a new introduction by **Lee Havis.** This introduction helps to clarify the underlying significance of Montessori principles, and provides an historical summary of the growth of the Montessori community since the time of the book's original publication in 1957. It also includes a description of the Society's approach to Montessori education and the formation of the IMAC accrediting agency in 1994.

Havis focuses his attention particularly on the underlying Montessori principles that Standing brought to light in his original 1957 text — perhaps the most "enduring legacy" of Dr. Montessori's contribution to the world. Havis also challenges readers to let this comprehensive biography of Dr. Montessori open up a deeper questioning of 'what is Montessori?' — to explore this question through the reader's own life and experience along a "new path in education committed to the emergence of the normalized child."

Havis also urges the reader to see the long-term nature and commitment of Montessori's work — to view the coming new thousand year period as the "*millennium of the child*". He states that "this publication is much more than a biography of Dr. Montessori, written by a close associate. It opens the reader to the timeless principles of nature which are vital to our own current research and work for her vision of a 'new education' in the world."

The 1998 revision also includes an updated appendix of the latest Montessori resources, books and organizations. Havis believes that this more current information will considerably enhance the practical value of this publication as a useful tool for the reader's further research and study in the field.

Order the 1998 edition of Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work from IMS. Price is $13.95, plus $1.50 postage and handling. Send order and payment to: IMS, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910.

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Morality

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MORALITY — Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 2

To Give Work

"...the ancient philosophical conception of evil resolves itself partially into so many social questions and actions...to give work...contributes largely to morality by removing so many causes of evil."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Spontaneous Act. in Ed.,*** *p 321*

Montessori teaching gives young children work to stimulate their natural interests and needs for intellectual activity — to practice and develop their mental faculties in the unconscious formation of basic character. The elementary child will later more consciously seek to learn about such abstract moral concepts as duty, honor, loyalty and integrity — and these too can become deeply integrated into the child's whole way of being for life. Morality therefore begins to form within the child as a natural process of meeting important intellectual needs for learning in the environment.

Intellectual Needs

"To respond to the intellectual needs of man...is to make an important contribution to morality."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Spontaneous Act. in Ed.,*** *p 323*

The young child develops the basic values of polite society by sharing materials and engaging in various forms of practical life learning with others. Even the child's own solitary concentrated activity with physical objects is leading to a social pattern of peaceful harmony with others — creating within the child a sense of basic mental order, emotional calm and persistence to work. The perfection of this "normalization" process in the child requires a corresponding type of perfection in the supervising adult as well.

Perfection

"The teacher who sets out with the idea that she is perfect...is not a good teacher...If we seek perfection, we must pay attention to our defects...We have,to face them in the full light of day and recognize their existence as something unavoidable throughout life."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Absorbent Mind,*** *p.246-47*

While the child is perfecting its morality through work, the Montessori teacher must likewise perfect her own being in the environment — to remove those detrimental influences around the child that can so persistently work against the child's true normalization. The teacher's perfection must particularly aim to discover and resolve the many unknown errors of her own "personality" — to restrain and re-direct whatever negative thoughts or actions there may be to abandon or repress the child's true nature. Being committed to Montessori principles directs us to view the good in ourselves and others as progress towards the central vision of the *normalized* child.

The Good

"'the good' are those who 'move towards the good'."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Discovery of the Child,*** *p 30*

Good Montessori teaching is not a fixed state of compliance with rigid moral rules, but rather a committed path of growth which is guided by universal laws of nature. The Montessori principle "observation" directs us to see the signs of good, positive behavior in the child, such as concentration to work, while we carefully engage and resolve the various detrimental influences that persist in its surrounding environment. Such a committed way of being with children can reveal many new ideas that have a wide application to the larger questions of morality in society.

New Ideas

"Morality must give us new ideas about good and evil, and the responsibilities towards humanity that individuals incur when they assume power so much greater than those with which they were naturally endowed."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***From Child, to Adolescence,*** *p.118*

Montessori teaching can set in motion many powerful new ideas in the world — creating a "*new education*" to profoundly transform our whole sense of reality and possibility for the future of mankind. This *new education* offers hope and direction for the emergence of a higher level of morality than has ever before been evident in human history. This *new morality* of the *normalized* child is based not on technical compliance with written laws and ethical codes, but rather on the transcendent truth and insuperable power of eternal and infinite laws of nature.

Public Assembly

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 2

The Assembly is now engaged in providing public information about its endorsements to local news media — to inform voters before the elections to be held in September and November.

For more information about the Assembly, contact: Lee Havis, Chairperson, MPA, #205, Silver Spring, MD 20910

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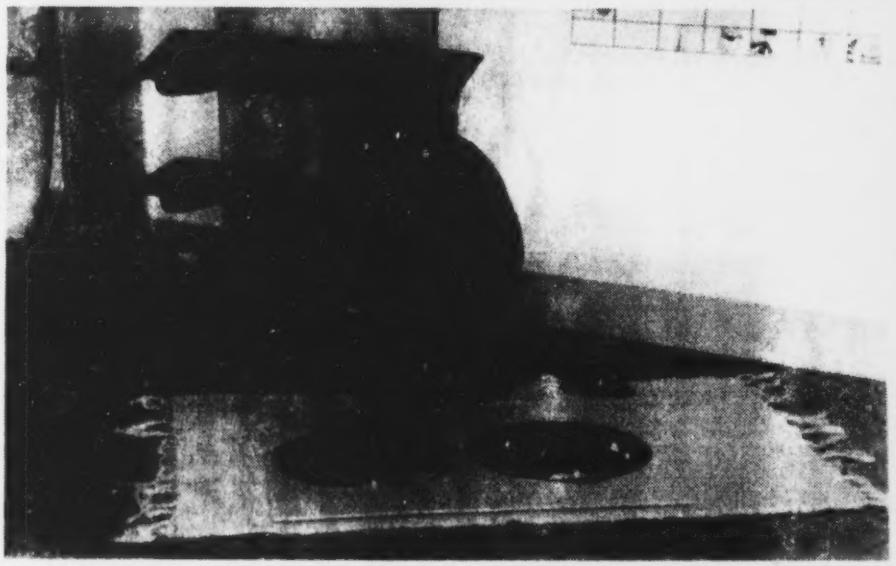
Election Victories for Public Assembly

On November 3, 1998, elections for many public offices were held in the state of Maryland, where the *Maryland Public Assembly* has been actively working in support of public interest politics. Candidates who were endorsed by the Assembly and who were elected are: **Montgomery County**, *County Council*, Blair Ewing and Isiah Leggett, *State's Attorney*, Douglas Gansler; **Baltimore City**, *State's Attorney*, Patricia Jessamy, **Frederick County**, *State Senate*, Alex Mooney. These persons will now have an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to service in the public interest in their respective elected offices.

Committed to Montessori principles, the *Maryland Public Assembly* has been providing a focus and support for voting in the public interest since its formation in

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 3



Child working with map puzzle at the Ecole Montessori International in Montreal, Canada

The New Ecole Montessori in Montreal, Canada

In August, 1998, **Jeannette Kechichian** established the *Ecole Montessori International* in Montreal, Canada. This French-English bi-lingual school serves children aged 2-5, and will soon provide an elementary Montessori program as well. Ms. Kechichian states that the program has expanded its enrollment so much now that new teaching personnel must be employed, and larger facilities obtained.

Ms. Kechichian's extensive educational background includes a degree in education from the University de Lyon in France. Since 1991, she has held teaching positions in various schools in Lebanon and Montreal. In 1997, she set in motion her plans to open her own Montessori school in Montreal. She believes strongly that the "*new education*" must be made more widely available in her region, and that her background in both English and French will be very helpful in many respects.

The *Ecole Montessori International* offers a full-day Montessori program for children aged 2-5, which has been receiving a strong support from parents in the area. The program also includes bi-lingual French-English language development, after school care to 6:00 pm daily, and swimming classes in a nearby YMCA facility.

In September, 1998, Ms. Kechichian attended the Society's "*Creating the New Education*" conference in Annapolis, MD, and is now coordinating registration and local participation for a similar conference in Montreal, Canada for the weekend of April 17-18, 1999.

For further information, contact: Jeannette Kechichian, *Ecole Montessori International*, 1432 Rue Poirier, St. Laurent, Quebec, H4L 1H3, Canada, tel. (514) 744-0606.

MONTESSORI CONFERENCES

Creating the New Education

Inner Preparation for Montessori teaching

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April 17-18, 1999

Louisville, KY
May 22-23, 1999

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
July 17-18, 1999

Singapore
July 24-25, 1999

Register 8 weeks before conference date for maximum discount

The Society's two-day weekend conference employs group discussion, demonstrations, and analysis to illustrate Montessori teaching skills. Lee Havis, IMS executive director, leads the discussion committed to Montessori principles.

For cost and registration form, contact IMS, 912 Thayer Ave., #207, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Tel. (301) 589-1127.

News from IMAC

The *International Montessori Accreditation Council* (IMAC) provides accreditation services for institutions which conduct Montessori teacher education throughout the world. Programs in Namibia (Africa) and Singapore (Asia) are currently under review by the IMAC Generic Review Committee (GRC).

The *Headstart Montessori Training Center* in Namibia will be undergoing its first on-site evaluation visit in December, 1998. The GRC authorized this visit after

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15

TRUST

by Lee Havis

"Immense powers are being entrusted to teachers, who cannot evade them."
Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***To Ed. the Hum Pot***, *p.78*

In this modern age, teachers are entrusted with enormous responsibility in the care and education of children. Governments everywhere customarily support a vast system of free public schools — trusting that their massive funding and compulsory attendance laws will somehow assure a higher level of learning and moral behavior in the next generation. However, since these efforts are essentially centered around a very limited concept of the child, we cannot really trust that such an antiquated education will significantly achieve its intended goals.

Antiquated Education

"...if education is always to be conceived along the same antiquated lines of a mere transmission of knowledge, there is little to be hoped from it for the bettering of man's future."
Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Absorbent Mind***, *p.3*

Public education aims primarily to provide a uniform curriculum for all — the individual child being considered as secondary to the transmission of prescribed subject matter. Such an antiquated education prevents the child from fully making its powerful transformational contribution to society. So, we should certainly mistrust this type of educational approach — and look instead for a *new education* which will serve the higher purpose of the child's true being in harmony with fundamental laws of nature.

Mistrust

"In the vicinity of children, mistrust melts away...we feel warmed by that flame of life which is there, where life originates."
Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Absorbent Mind***, *p.264*

Many parents and teachers have come to mistrust the typical public school approach of rigid group instruction, grades and teacher-controlled curriculum — choosing instead more child-centered options, such as home schooling, non-government education and tutoring. Nevertheless, a very traditional education has become well established in society over the years, and still commands a considerable loyalty from many. So, we continue to play out a dramatic struggle with children in education — reflecting a hope in the external world where issues of power and control are generally resolved through such means as guns, war, prisons and police.

Hope in the External World

"We can thus place...no hope in the external world until the normalization of man is recognized as a basic social need."
Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Secret of Childhood***, *p.208*

Society places its hope for social uplift in an educational system which is typically governed by many restrictive external laws and traditional practices. Such a traditional education tends to bend and mold the child according to the demands and order of a very limited social vision. With remarkable credulity, the ordinary adult still tends to believe that this conventional approach to the child will somehow bring about an end to such long-standing and deeply entrenched problems as poverty, ignorance and violence in society.

Credulity

"Credulity is, indeed, a characteristic of immature minds which lack experiences and knowledge of realities..."
Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Spontaneous Act. in Ed***, *p.233*

Society has not yet come to fully recognize the underlying flaws and limits of ordinary education — preferring instead to sustain a state of credulity concerning its basic effect on children. By contrast, Montessori education offers the more visionary alternative of trust in the child's true nature; i.e., the normal child with its spontaneous self-discipline and harmony with the entire environment. However, this Montessori vision of normal being remains hidden by the popular view of the child as weak, dependent and fanciful — an entity which must be held in check within a constant state of fear.

State of Fear

"...people...take advantage of this state of fear aroused in the child, in order to obtain obedience by threatening the child."
Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Voice****, 21st November 1941, p.6*

Traditional teachers lack the experience or preparation to look for normal being in the child, and so they tend to teach through fear, threat and manipulation. Such traditional education trusts essentially in a state of fear with children — to force their compliance with the many demands of the teacher's authority and control in the classroom. By contrast, Montessori teaching trusts in a *new education* which aims to discover and free the child's true nature for full expression in the world.

New Education

"A new education from birth onward must be reconstructed and based on the laws of nature and not on the preconceived notions and prejudices of adult society."
Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Formation of Man***, *p.97*

Dr. Montessori's *new education* is radically distinct from the traditional approach of control and manipulation of the child — seeking instead to "control the environment, not the child". This new way of being trusts such fundamental natural laws as (1) "Observation", (2) "Individual Liberty"; and (3) "Preparation

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 2

Look for the
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Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

Picking, Poking and Pushing

The teacher here has repeatedly tried to re-direct three year old Richard away from his habitual pattern of picking, poking and pushing other children and objects in the environment (**See *Observer***, *September, 1998*). However, she has failed to achieve any long term success with her efforts to "control the environment, not the child"

In this *moment of peril*, the detrimental influences around Richard may be "physical objects" or "other children", as well as the "adult personality". The rule of thumb here is to control the "physical object" first, if this is involved — perhaps to touch or hold it lightly to get the child's attention. Then, the teacher can offer some positive verbal re-direction — to gently lead Richard away to a more suitable activity elsewhere.

If Richard seems unable to handle any object without a destructive result, the teacher may offer a simple finger play or hand movement — to help the child acquire some basic control and awareness over his body. Perhaps an exercise like careful walking would also help focus Richard's attention to his body.

To remove the detrimental influence of the "adult personality' is more delicate, and certainly will involve some thoughtful inner preparation — to notice and control any words or action of the teacher that bring negative attention to the matter at issue in the situation. The teacher must provide the most positive and persistent communication possible in each situation.

In time, the child's own "teacher within" will call Richard to more attentive, goal-directed activity. Then the picking, poking and pushing activity will disappear, as he returns to his normal state of calm and orderly behavior in the environment.

Fight for Control

Two year old Mary and 4 year old Janet seem to constantly seek out the same object — to ultimately fight over its control in a constant battle for possession. The teacher has been dealing with this fight for control between Mary and Janet by offering herself in the friendly role of mediator. However, Mary's limited physical strength and lack of verbal skills prevent her from engaging fairly with Janet, who usually ends up grabbing the object from Mary's hands. Then Mary cries for help from the teacher. What to do?

Answer in Observer, March, 1999

Trust

Cont'd. from Page 2, Col. 3

of the Environment" These three Montessori principles can provide a most reliable inner guidance for the teacher's actions with children from one moment to the next.

Reliable Guidance

"Reliable guidance, and the possibility of checking as we go, are the indispensable conditions for getting anywhere."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Absorbent Mind**, p.227*

Infinite and eternal laws of nature can reliably guide us along a path that will ultimately reveal the reality of the child's true normal nature. This new path of inner preparation challenges us to extend our understanding of the child beyond the prejudicial expectations of our immediate knowledge — to trust in the ultimate perfection of the entire interrelated functioning of the universe. Such a cosmic education allows us to resolve problems with children by expanding our awareness of Montessori principles until the child finally emerges in its ultimate state of true normality.

Cosmic Education

"...all things are part of the universe, and are connected with each other to form one whole unity...This plan of cosmic education...is received with joy by the child who has been prepared for it in the Montessori school."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **To Ed. the Hum. Pot.**, p.8-10*

Montessori teaching applies such principles as "observation" to see the child's true spirit which is beyond the immediate outward reality of some particular form of misbehavior. This type of cosmic approach allows us to relate the child's actions with those of our own — to gradually discover and resolve our unknown inner errors which are blocking the emergence of the *normalized* child. Montessori teaching therefore does not rest on such external symbols as certification and materials, but rather on our faith in infinite and eternal laws of nature.

Faith

"...the Montessori teacher...must have faith in the child who will reveal himself through work"

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Ed. for a New World**, p.67*

The Montessori teacher can trust the child to reveal its true nature as we apply Montessori principles in the environment. With practice and experience, we can develop a real faith in the normalization of the child that will arise from its profound concentration on some object of particular interest. We can likewise come to trust in

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 1

Election Victories

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 1

1997. It has pursued this purpose by endorsing candidate and providing information to guide voters in making a proper choice in the elections.

After candidates were endorsed in open meetings around the state in summer, 1998, the Assembly circulated its list of endorsed candidates as widely as possible. Press releases were distributed to the news media and several articles appeared — bringing positive attention to the Assembly and its endorsed candidates. Volunteer help on election day was also provided to endorsed candidates.

Lee Havis, Chairperson of the Assembly, stated that this first election cycle has demonstrated some considerable strength and viability to the Assembly's work in the electoral process. He stated "we have now shown that it is possible to put into practice the concept of commitment to public interest in politics. Our message resonated with many candidates who later included a notice of our endorsement in their printed campaign literature to the general public. Some also expressed interest in printing and distributing a sample ballot with other endorsed candidates. I believe that these hopeful initial efforts will bear fruit in future elections where we can build on the strength of our current position in the community."

Havis indicated that the Assembly now plans to analyze the electoral results and help focus attention on issues and strategies for more successful results in the future. He stated that "education is one important area of local and state concern — and there is much reform that is needed in the laws and regulation. I hope we can encourage candidates to take a bolder position in support of greater freedom of expression and opportunity for competition and choice in this critical field."

For further information about the Assembly, write or call: Lee Havis, Chairperson, Maryland Public Assembly, 912 Thayer Ave., #205, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Tel. (301) 589-0733.

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the child's own deep inner sensibilities for normal growth — to assure for itself a real harmony with the entire environment.

Deep Sensibilities

"The child grows by means of experiences led by deep sensibilities they are ruled by vital laws."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Voice***, 19 Nov. 1941, p. a*

Deep inner sensibilities guide the child to intelligently explore its environment, and achieve a true harmony and complete integration of its personality. The practice of Montessori teaching helps us trust this guiding teacher within the child — to experience the truth of the *normalized* child with its spontaneous self-discipline, order and precocious intelligence. Then we will see in the child a remarkable level of self-confidence — a great capacity to engage in a wide range of constructive, goal-directed activity with others.

Self Confidence

"...confidence must develop in the child from inner sources with which the teacher has nothing to do. The child, once he feels sure of himself, will no longer seek the approval of authority after every step."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Absorbent Mind**, p. 251*

The *normalized* child shows a genuine self-confidence in all its actions — deciding and judging what to do for itself without the need for the teacher's praise, direction or control. We can likewise develop a corresponding self-confidence in our own practice of Montessori teaching — to consistently create the necessary conditions for this normalization to occur. Then, the *normalized* child can carry out its vital work of creating a new and better humanity in the world.

New Humanity

"This is the hope we have — a hope in a new humanity that will come from this new education."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Reconstruction in Ed.**, p. 14*

Montessori teaching trusts in the child's true nature as the essential basis for a more peaceful and orderly humanity. The hope for such a *new humanity* is premised on the reality of the child's being in harmony with fundamental laws of nature — the tangible result that emerges from our Montessori teaching. However, such a new humanity can only come about as we consistently apply Montessori principles with children today — to put into practice our trust in Dr. Montessori's vision of the *new education*.

***Voice** refers to *The Voice of Dr. Maria Montessori*, Joy Hardinge, Ed.*

Sara Pileggi (Columbia, Maryland) making presentation at the "Creating the New Education" conference held in Annapolis, MD, September 26-27, 1998.

News from IMAC

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 3

a very comprehensive self-study report was prepared and then later successfully revised by the Headstart institution, according to GRC recommendations. The evaluation team will consist of two experienced Montessori professionals from neighboring South Africa, **Hillary McLeod** and **Gayle Thompson**.

On a regular basis, IMAC has been receiving inquiries about its accreditation from institutions interested in starting a Montessori teacher education program, and from those that are currently operating without suitable Montessori accreditation. A training program in South Africa and one in Malaysia are the latest to inquire. Both of these would fall under the purview of the GRC, and suitable application forms were sent out to begin the process IMAC accreditation.

In other matters, IMAC remains vigilant over the influence and involvement of government in the operation of Montessori education. On December 7-9, 1998, the US Department of Education will convene its advisory committee in Washington, DC to consider matters related to recognition of accreditation in Montessori education. **Lee Havis**, IMAC chairperson, will attend and present testimony on behalf of IMAC — to argue for fairness in the enforcement of the Department's recognition procedures and criteria.

The issue of government recognition of IMAC accreditation has also been brought up elsewhere by various agencies involved in the regulation of Montessori schools. IMAC is therefore seeking to assure that its accreditation is accepted under all pertinent laws and regulations in every jurisdiction.

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The Montessori OBSERVER

STRENGTH

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Children working with practical life activities at the Windsor Montessori School (Windsor, Connecticut)

Montessori School in Windsor, Connecticut

The *Windsor Montessori School* was established in 1986 by the Town of Windsor as a community resource for all its residents. It is located in facilities known as the Milo W. Peck Child Development Center which provides a variety of community services for the Town. The property includes an outdoor recreational area of 44 semi-wooded acres and nature trails.

Directed by **Anne Wakelin**, the Windsor school contains three separate Montessori classrooms which serve an enrollment of over 60 children from age 18 months to 6 years. Half and full-day schedules are provided as well as special programs for music, movement, French, Spanish and computer education. In the summer, a special camp program entitled "*A Taste of Montessori*" is offered. This summer program makes good use of the ample outdoor space for nature walks and movement exercises.

In April, 1998, **Allison McLeod**, a member of the Windsor teaching staff, enrolled in the IMS Montessori teacher education program. She is presently completing her preparation in this correspondence course for certification as a Montessori teacher with children aged 2-6. Ms. McLeod holds a BS degree in Education from the University of Maine (1972) and has been serving as a teacher of young children since 1984. She has been employed on the staff of Windsor Montessori School since 1989.

For further information, contact: Anne Wakelin, Director, Windsor Montessori School, 114 Palisado Ave., Windsor, CT 06095, Tel. (860) 285-1420.

Reception for Public Interest Candidates

On January 27, 1999, *the Maryland Public Assembly* (MPA) held a reception to honor its endorsed candidates in the fall, 1998 elections. A public interest citizen organization, the MPA applies such Montessori principles as "*individual liberty*" to the field of politics in the state of Maryland, USA.

Attending the reception were endorsed candidates and members and friends of the Assembly from throughout the state. Assembly endorsed **Isiah Leggett** and **Blair Ewing**, were present to report their experiences in the elections and activities thereafter as elected members of the local county council. Other endorsed candidates attended also, reflecting a broad background of campaign experience and effort during the 1998 elections.

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 2

Fair Treatment Sought for IMAC Accreditation

On December 9, 1998, **Lee Havis** appeared before an advisory committee of the U.S. Department of Education — to testify for greater fairness in the federal recognition of accreditation of Montessori teacher education. This hearing was held in Washington, DC, as part of the federal government's oversight and review of accrediting agencies it recognizes to

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For full cost and registration details, contact: IMS, 912 Thayer Ave., #207, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Tel. (301) 589-1127.

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STRENGTH

by Lee Havis

"The strength of even the smallest children is more than we might imagine, but it must have a free play in order to reveal itself...when children...come into contact with nature, they reveal their strength."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Discovery of the Child**, p.69*

Although the child is born with the ultimate strength and power of universal laws of nature, its outward expression is nonetheless critically dependent on certain experiences that can only take place during the formative period of early childhood. These experiences will determine the child's essential way of being for life — and the extent to which such inborn normal qualities as attachment to reality, spontaneous self-discipline and order will be fully expressed in the individual. So, if parents and teachers impose a negative, repressive environment on the young child, it will not develop normally, and evolve instead a superficial personality with strong defenses against any positive interaction with others.

Strong Defenses

"An adult environment is not a suitable environment for children, but rather an aggregate of obstacles that strengthen their defenses, warp their attitudes, and expose them to adult suggestion."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Secret of Childhood**, p.109*

Ordinary education tends to repress and control the child's natural instincts for order and harmony — building up instead a defensive, reactive pattern towards the entire environment. The child is then considerably limited in its strength of character, mind and body — a victim of the many surrounding detrimental influences of others. The traditional early childhood experience therefore results in a very weak individual who lacks the self-confidence and independent judgment that is so vitally needed for successful daily living in society.

A Weak Individual

"The child who is not properly cared for takes vengeance on society by forming a weak individual, an obstacle to the progress of civilization."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Ed. for a New World**, p.32*

A weak individual does not persist in work and tends to avoid any personal responsibility for action and being with others. From childhood, this weakness can become firmly fixed in the adult's whole personality — the logical consequence of a traditional education with its characteristic teacher-centered curriculum, grading system, group instruction, rewards and punishment. Within such a repressive learning environment, the child has no rights or freedom to develop its inherent normal strength in harmony with the fundamental laws of nature.

Rights

"...what rights has he who comes among us without strength and without thought?. ..we recognize the rights of adults — a civilization based on the rights of the strongest."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Spontaneous Act. in Ed.**, p.12-16*

Parents and teachers tend to control and manipulate children according to rights that have been well established over centuries of human civilization. The countervailing natural rights of the child have been largely overlooked, and only recently have they been considered as part of a possible alternative approach to traditional education. The human spirit is therefore ordinarily locked into a fierce battle against the arbitrary authority of others — a fundamental conflict between the purpose of nature and the surrounding forces of a repressive adult society.

The Fierce Battle

"In the fierce battle which social life has become, man needs a strong character. He needs...to be endowed with practical capabilities to face up to the difficulties of life."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **From Childhood to Adolescence**, p.61*

The child naturally seeks to express its strength in the face of many opposing forces — a fight for life which continues with adults in its various forms of struggle for gain and advantage over others. This fierce battle is evident in such outer forms as war and criminality, but it also exists in many hidden, less violent forms of competition, commerce and politics. The essential will-power needed for success in these daily life struggles, however, is too often lacking in adults who were denied the proper opportunities for self-expression and normal development during the critical early childhood years.

Will-power

"That which gives strength to resist is not the moral vision, it is the exercise of will-power."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Spontaneous Act. in Ed.**, p.182-83*

Will-power can develop normally only before the age of about six when the child is forming itself through various experiences of choice and decision-making in the environment. Montessori education therefore seeks to support this normal development by offering many opportunities for the child to work with materials according to its own self-directed needs and interests of the moment. The child is then able to form within itself a strong character to withstand and overcome the many formidable trials and difficulties that will invariably arise in later adult life.

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Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

Fight for Control

When two children fight for control of an object, it is usually best to allow them to work out the problem for themselves. However, two year old Mary in this *moment of peril* lacks sufficient verbal skills to resolve the conflict on her own in this manner, and so the teacher must intervene to assure a suitable resolution (**See *Observer*, *November, 1998***).

The teacher is frustrated here, however, because she sees the problem too late to intervene before the object is grabbed away from Mary, and her crying begins. The teacher should therefore intervene at an earlier point in the controversy — to control the object with her hand, if necessary.

In the midst of the physical fight for control of the object, the teacher may then interpret Mary's objections in words to the other child, e.g., "Mary is not finished with this"; or "would you like to ask Mary to use this (object) now?" With eye contact and positive language, the teacher is then giving a practical life lesson in grace and courtesy. The adult's modeling of proper language and respectful manner at this moment will give the children the proper social tools needed to avoid and manage these social conflicts in the future.

If the teacher arrives at the scene after an object has been taken away from a crying Mary, she may then interpret Mary's upset and need for the object, and then go with her to the other child to discuss the matter in a courteous and respectful manner, e.g., "Mary was not finished with the (object)", or "give me the (object) and let me show you how to ask Mary to hand it to you". Again, adult modeling of proper language and behavior seeks to accurately interpret the position of the pre-verbal child — a valuable support in the environment to allow the children to return to their normal condition of harmony in the social situation.

TIME OUT

When the teacher's efforts to ignore or redirect a misbehaving child do not seem effective, she uses "*time out*" — to have the child sit by itself to calm down and re-focus attention to a more normal way of being. While these "time out" procedures seem necessary to resolve the immediate misbehavior, she notices also that the long-term problems of misbehavior remain. So, she wonders if this "time-out" procedure may be building up a negative dependency/control in her relationship with the children. *What to do?*

*Answer in **Observer**, May, 1999*

Strength

Cont'd. from Page 2, Col. 3

Strong Character

"The child adopts with simplicity an attitude of deep seclusion and there forms in him also a strong

and calm character radiating love to those about him."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Absorbent Mind**, p.273*

Children in the Montessori environment develop basic character through the free exercise of choice in handling a wide variety of well-ordered materials designed for self-directed learning. By concentrating on objects and exercises of its own true interest, the child comes into a state of inner peace and calm — a "*normalized*" condition that is seen in outer form as a strong character of integrity and confidence with others. The *normalized* child shows a profound inner strength which brings the power of infinite and eternal laws of nature to bear in the realm of physical reality.

Inner Strength

"The children would not obey the adult because they had a higher inner law which commanded them and therefore the adult was powerless in front of this irresistible inner strength."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Voice of Dr. Montessori**, p.252*

The child's inner strength shows itself in calm and certain actions to work through and resolve the many daily problems of ordinary social life. Montessori teaching supports young children in this development by creating the right conditions for their "*normalization*" — the fundamental psychological shift of the child's whole way of being that was first observed and described by Dr. Montessori in 1907. Since then, a strong family of Montessori practitioners has emerged to represent this visionary "*new education*" in many diverse regions of the world.

A Strong Family

"...this educational movement...has taken root in many countries...I feel as if I were addressing a strong family which must continue along the road we have opened up and which ..has great need of faith and hope."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Formation of Man**, p.3*

The Montessori community now consists of a vast number of schools and teachers identified with the Montessori name — a strong family which is nonetheless struggling to perfect and improve its application and practice of this revolutionary approach to the child. The struggle for this revolutionary vision goes on both inside and outside the Montessori community; however, its central focus is always on the reality of the *normalized* child which lies in the realm of the spirit within each individual. The true strength of Montessori education therefore is not in the number of adherents or schools identified with the name, but rather in the fundamental principles that allow the child's true nature to fully emerge.

Strength from a Principle

"...'to derive strength from a principle' we imply that the ever-inquiring intelligence should be left at liberty to perform its work of reconstruction and salvation."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Spontaneous Act. In Ed.**, p.216*

The adult's commitment to such principles as (1) "*Observation*"; (2) "*Individual Liberty*" and (3) "*Preparation of the Environment*" is the real source of strength and guidance for Montessori teaching. These three Montessori principles provide a solid guidance to our efforts in creating Dr. Montessori's *new education* in the world. Opposing such work, however, is the constant tendency to weaken, dilute, and compromise its central ideas through the process of their widespread communication to others.

Widespread Ideas

"Ideas lose strength in becoming widespread."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **From Childhood to Adolescence**, p.34*

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 1

Positions & Placements

Montessori Elementary Teachers: The Merced City School District, a progressive public school system, located just 2 hours from San Francisco, is accepting applications for elementary Montessori trained teachers and administrators. Salary range with BA is $28,919-$55,873. Call or send resume to Tina Johns, Director, Personnel Services, 444 W. 23rd St., Merced CA 95340, (209) 385-6376.

Elementary Montessori Teacher: Small, traditional, primary school with a very complete inventory of Montessori materials seeks an experienced, elementary certified teacher to help develop a new 6-9 program. Telluride is a small mountain town with a world class ski area and many cultural event. Mail resume to Box 365, Telluride, CO 81435 and/or call (970) 728-1169 for Karen Walker.

Upper Elementary Teacher: Premier Montessori school (ages 2-12), established 1962, will need a Montessori trained Upper Elementary Teacher to begin September, 1999. The school is located in beautiful country a half-hour from downtown Philadelphia. Excellent salary and benefits. Visit school website at www.gladwyne.org. Send resume and cover letter to: Walter Ebmeyer, Headmaster, Gladwyne Montessori School, 920 Youngsford Rd., Gladwyne, PA 19035, FAX 610-649-7978.

March, 1999
Vol. XX, No. 1

Strength

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STRENGTH

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Such Montessori ideas as the *normalized* child and the *prepared environment* can easily lose their strength as they are adapted to conform to the deeply entrenched patterns of prejudice and limitation in society. Too often, the widespread usage of such terms has led to a considerable weakening and distortion of their meaning as they become caught up and confused with various traditional ways of thinking about the child and education. We must therefore constantly strengthen our commitment to the expansive vision of the *normalized* child through ever deeper self-examination, study and inner preparation — to keep expanding this inner vision towards its ultimate promise of a stronger and better humanity in the future.

Stronger Humanity

"It is not enough to ensure for the child food, clothing and shelter on the satisfaction of his more spiritual needs the progress of humanity depends — the creation indeed of a stronger and better humanity."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***To Ed. the Hum. Potential****, p.120*

Applying Montessori principles with children will certainly lead us along a new and favorable path for the transformation of humanity. However, our progress in this work cannot be measured by such superficial facts as its external appearance or agreement with others. Rather, the true strength of our efforts lies entirely within ourselves — a transcendent power to realize the true *normalized* child with the necessary strength to overcome the many obstacles in society which oppose the complete harmony, order and peace of mankind.

Society Accepts Payments by Credit Card

The Society is now qualified to accept Visa/Master card payments for its various services and products. Payments can therefore now be made by phone, fax, mail or internet correspondence.

Lee Havis, IMS executive director, believes that this new credit card payment system will particularly ease the burden of its international correspondents who must otherwise pay with foreign currency or make inconvenient and costly exchange arrangements. He also stated that payment through credit card helps to resolve the difficult and uncertain nature of mail payments and check writing procedures which would otherwise deter participation in many situations.

Reception

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 2

Lee Havis, MPA chairperson, noted the reception as an important opportunity to focus the Assembly for its future actions to support voting for the public interest. He stated that "the reception showed the need to work together with others in the electoral process. I believe the Assembly can serve to focus this work for successful public interest campaign efforts in the future."

Havis indicated also his plans for MPA to sponsor workshops to help future candidates identify more successful campaign issues and strategies, and to compile and disseminate this type of data to all interested parties. For more information about the *Maryland Public Assembly*, contact Lee Havis, tel. (301) 589-0733.

IMAC Testifies

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 3

qualify institutions to receive federal funding through such means as student loans and grants.

As chairperson of the *International Montessori Accreditation Council* (IMAC), Havis urged the panel to withdraw the recognition of another accrediting agency in the field of Montessori teacher education as lacking in reliability and compliance with federal recognition criteria. He particularly emphasized the unfair and prejudicial nature of this situation to IMAC — creating a potentially negative perception of the quality and reliability of IMAC accreditation in the general public.

Havis also noted the other agency's lack of proper purpose to receive federal funds. After considerable discussion of these points, the advisory committee voted to require the other accrediting agency to demonstrate full compliance with the Department's recognition criteria by Dec. 9, 1999.

Havis indicated that the IMAC agency will continue to monitor the progress of this compliance, and work to resolve the long-term issues of governmental bias and unfair interference in accreditation of Montessori teacher education. The committee will next take up this matter at hearings in 1999.

On February 2, 1999, IMAC submitted further written comments to the Department of Education, to substantiate and update the testimony presented at the December hearings. For copy of IMAC written testimony and other information about IMAC accreditation standards and procedures, contact Lee Havis, tel. (301) 589-1127.

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May, 1999 Vol. XX, No. 2

The Montessori OBSERVER

MATURITY

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IMAC Speaks out for Montessori in US Government Hearings

On May 12, 1999, **Lee Havis** testified in Washington, DC on behalf of the *International Montessori Accreditation Council* (IMAC). His testimony was given before an advisory committee of the US Department of Education dealing with government recognition of Montessori accreditation. In his comments, Havis spoke out for greater freedom and fairness in the government regulation and recognition of Montessori teacher education.

The IMAC agency offers accreditation services for Montessori teacher education conducted by the International Montessori Society and other institutions and organizations in the Montessori community. At the May hearings, Havis specifically opposed the US government recognition of another agency in the same field because of its adverse effects on IMAC representation of Montessori education to the general public. He stated that "government should not take sides for or against one form of Montessori certification, accreditation or philosophy over another in the field".

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 1

Visiting a Montessori school in La Salle, Quebec, after the conference in Montreal, Canada. From left — classroom teacher, Jeannette Kechichian, Anne Mansour (school director) and Lee Havis.

Montessori Conference in Montreal, Canada

On April 17-18, 1999, the Society held its latest "*Creating the New Education*" conference in Montreal, Canada. **Jeannete Kechichian**, director of *Ecole Montessori International* (Montreal) provided local support and coordination for this first ever IMS Montessori conference in Canada. Participating were teachers and parents from the Canadian provinces of Quebec and Ontario, and from the United States, the states of New Hampshire, New York, Massachusetts, Maryland and North Carolina.

As always, **Lee Havis**, IMS executive director, led the group discussion at the conference through a careful analysis of common misbehavior situations with children — to show how the "*normalized*" child will indeed emerge from our being committed to Montessori principles. The conference provided many illustrations, examples and scenarios to visualize and illustrate the Montessori approach of "*control the environment, not the child*".

Participants specifically considered such issues as misuse of materials, fantasy, dependency, negativity, social disorder, inattention and violence in children. In addition, a special observation exercise was employed to help participants more directly experience the use and power of this important Montessori principle with children.

The conference discussion particularly emphasized the difficult problem of removing the *adult personality* as a detrimental influence in the child's environment. Havis stated that "our personality usually expresses itself around one of two extreme poles of dysfunctional activity with children, either 'negativity' or 'abandonment'. However, Montessori teaching is completely separate and apart from this dysfunctional bi-polar way of being. Montessori teaching is a third pole of adult activity which aims

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 2

MONTESSORI CONFERENCES

Creating the New Education

Inner Preparation for Montessori teaching

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
July 17-18, 1999

Singapore
July 24-25, 1999

Austin, Texas
Sept. 11-12, 1999

Register 8 weeks before conference date for maximum discount
$130/member $170/regular

For full cost and registration details, contact: IMS, 912 Thayer Ave., #207, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Tel. (301) 589-1127.

TRUST TUTORING

New Opening in California

Since 1992, TRUST TUTORING has been applying Montessori principles to help students learn more effectively at home through a supervised program of one-to-one instruction. This in-home tutoring program provides a *study skill* approach to learning, and has proven adaptable to a wide range of ages and subjects. It has been gradually expanding its operation in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States to include a network of regional directors who provide the necessary contracting with clients and supervision of tutors in their local area.

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 3

MATURITY

by Lee Havis

This commentary revisits this subject which was first considered in the Observer in May, 1989, Vol. X, No. 3

"...humanity is still far from the stage of maturity needed for the realization of its aspirations, for the construction, that is, of a harmonious and peaceful society and the elimination of wars."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Absorbent Mind,*** *p 3*

Dr Montessori recognized the great need for a higher level of maturity in humanity — to overcome the many obstacles to a true normal peace and harmony in the world. Her response to this vital need was a new education for children — to allow their true normal nature to fully emerge with such amazingly mature qualities as order, attachment to reality, spontaneous self-discipline, and complete harmony with the entire environment. However, creating such a *new education* requires us to assist an adult undergo a very delicate and demanding type of inner preparation.

To Assist an Adult

"To assist an adult we must help him untangle a skein of complex adaptations that have been made over a long period of time. To assist a child we must provide him with an environment which will enable him to develop freely."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Secret of Childhood,*** *p 110*

Montessori teacher preparation aims primarily to assist an adult work through and resolve many complex and deep seated patterns of fear, illusion and prejudice within oneself. Such *inner preparation* must confront and correct hidden flaws and unknown errors which have been built up and fixed in our personality since childhood. Montessori teaching therefore requires a very mature and sophisticated response to children — to restrain our ordinary impulses to either judgmentally blame a misbehaving child or abandon the child to various forms of fantasy play during its most delicate period of early childhood life.

Delicate Period of Life

"the period of life during which the body attains maturity is, in fact, a delicate one."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***From Child, to Adolescence,*** *p 63*

Before the age of about six, the young child matures through a series of delicate internal changes which will ultimately determine its essential personality for life. During these early years, the child needs a most positive, supportive environment, to assure its full and free normal growth and development thereafter. Without such a "normalizing" environment, the young child tends to mature in an abnormal manner — to eventually become a great danger to the progress and safety of mar.kind.

Great Danger

"This is the great danger of mankind. The child who is not protected with a view to his normal formation will later avenge himself on society by means of the child who is formed by him."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Absorbent Mind,*** *p 78*

Ordinary education seriously endangers the child's normal path of development — by disregarding its inborn needs for self-directed activity in the environment according to basic laws of life. Teacher-controlled curriculum, grades, fantasy play and group instruction all work against this normal path of maturation. This type of traditional education may allow the child to mature in a physical sense, but its repressive spiritual environment will fundamentally retard the growth of more important inner qualities of spirit and character.

Spiritual Environment

"A man can grow and reach maturity within a spiritual environment that is really not his own. He lives shut out from the paradise that should have been his."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Secret of Childhood,*** *p 46-47*

Only a positive and supportive spiritual environment during the early years will lay the proper foundation for full maturity in later life. The young child in this formative period instinctively acquires such vital normal qualities as inner peace, emotional balance, order and harmony with others — through the working of its amazing "absorbent mind". Likewise, a hostile environment during this critical time will lead the child away from normal development — towards a pattern of deceit and illusion which is readily reinforced and strengthened in later adult life.

Deceit

"Deceit is an intellectual phenomenon that appears in childhood, but which becomes organized with maturity."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Secret of Childhood,*** *p 175*

The young child will naturally react in a deceitful, defensive manner to the imposition of adult control and manipulation. Such traditional teaching, based entirely on an adult-centered curriculum, tends to divert and retard the child's normal path towards a truly mature character and personality. Here the child is compelled to learn by listening to words, rather than through a direct experience of the natural order of physical reality.

Listening to Words

"...listening to words does not make a man. Only practical work and experience lead the young to maturity."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Absorbent Mind,*** *p 22*

Young children cannot normally mature by just listening to words of lecture and explanation from the teacher. Such a traditional approach to education distracts the child's attention towards the imperfect, limited reality of the adult personality. Immature minds particularly need a

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Lee Havis, Executive Director

The **Montessori Observer** is mailed four times each year, in March, May, September and November, to Society members throughout the world. The purpose is to provide news and information about the Society's work in Montessori education, and to extend awareness of Montessori principles throughout the world.

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Advertising space is available for services and products relating to Montessori education. Marketplace ads are $7/line. Position and placement ads are $20 each and will be set and edited by the Society to conform to space requirements. Write for the Society's advertising outline for details about design advertising rates.

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Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

TIME OUT

The teacher here uses a form of *"time out"* to stop children from misbehaving — requiring that they sit in a chair by themselves for a while, to reflect on proper behavior in the classroom. Although this seems to solve the short term misbehavior, the long-term harm is to create in the children a negative dependency on the adult's position of authority and control (**see Observer**, *March, 1999*). Indeed, this *time out* action does draw undue attention to the child's misbehavior — the "adult personality" here being the primary detrimental influence at cause in the environment.

Since *time out* is not really consistent with the approach of *"control the environment, not the child"*, the teacher should find another more suitable way to help the child regain its self-control and proper normal functioning in the classroom. A more effective Montessori response would be to act indirectly in the child's environment — to intervene with some friendly, positive distraction away from the scene of misbehavior and disorder.

Sometimes, a simple question or invitation to clean up a work space, throw away some trash, or return materials to the shelf, may be quite sufficient to redirect the child to more normal behavior. Regardless of its particular form, the teacher's distracting interference will certainly tend to stop the negative behavior in this *moment of peril* — and open up an opportunity for more concentrated goal-directed activity elsewhere in the environment. Such concentrated work — not sitting in a chair under a teacher-directed *time out* — is the real way to return the child to its own proper path of normal development.

Adult Control

The Montessori teacher has a classroom assistant who tends to speak in a loud, accusatory tone with misbehaving children — frequently interrupting and correcting them in the typical manner of traditional teaching. Although the assistant states that she is willing and eager to learn better Montessori teaching skills, she does not follow the direction and good example of the lead teacher to any significant extent. What to do?

Answer in Observer, September, 1999

Maturity

Cont'd. from Page 2, Col. 3

direct sensory experience of reality if they are to grow beyond the limited mind-set, rules and opinions of ordinary adult society.

Immature Minds

"Credulity is, indeed, a characteristic of immature minds which lack the experiences and knowledge of realities."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Spontaneous Act. in Ed.****, p.259*

Traditional education tends to maintain the immature minds of young children in a retarded state of development — bound to the limited perspective of the controlling adult personality. The ordinary child is thereby denied the opportunity of developing through its own direct experience of the physical laws of nature. By contrast, Montessori teaching directs the child's attention towards the more objective reality of a well-prepared arrangement of physical objects in the environment.

Environment

"...environment has a dominant part to play in the process of maturation."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Absorbent Mind****, p.95*

Montessori teaching aims to create an environment which is consistent with the order of nature as represented by such fundamental principles as (1) "Observation", (2) "Individual Liberty"; and (3) "Preparation of the Environment". These three Montessori principles guide the teacher to *"control the environment, not the child"* — to allow the child to mature according to its own individual path of self-creative development. Adults are then acting as a force of nature — to remove the detrimental influences of the environment through the guiding influence of the three Montessori principles.

Adults

"...adults are also a part of a child's environment...They should not carry out for him those activities by means of which a child reaches maturity."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Secret of Childhood****, p.110*

Montessori education seeks to remove all detrimental influences from around the individual child — including, most prominently, the negative and destructive effects of one's own personal presence. Adults must therefore carefully control their own personality expression with children — to restrain those various negative and thoughtless words and actions which so fundamentally conflict with the child's own true normal development. Such Montessori teaching can only then reveal the obvious truth of our normal being in harmony with by the absolute and eternal laws of nature.

An Obvious Truth

"A kind of internal maturity must come about...When an obvious truth cannot be seen we must retire and leave the individual to mature. A struggle 'to bring about perception of evidence' would be bitter and exhausting."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Spontaneous Act. in Ed.****, p.237*

The obvious truth of the *normalized* child is ordinarily hidden by the many camouflages and conventions of ordinary society — a retarded state of awareness which is deeply enmeshed in the human personality. Such a limited perception is associated with unknown inner errors which persist at the unconscious level to deter our clear vision of any new creative alternative to the habits and prejudices of the past. We must therefore carefully prepare our spirit and intelligence to notice and overcome these elusive inner obstacles — to prepare ourselves within to discover the reality of the child's true nature.

Spirit and Intelligence

"...men do not produce with their feet and their bodies, but with their spirit and intelligence, and when these shall have reached the level of development that is proper to them, then all our 'insoluble problems' will have become solved."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Absorbent Mind****, p.285*

Time, experience and age alone cannot completely mature our Montessori teaching skills with children. Rather, we must engage in the precise and challenging work of *inner preparation* — to constantly expand our spirit and direct our intelligence to discover and correct those unknown inner errors which can so easily blind us to the reality of the *normalized* child. Only then can we begin to see how to translate Dr. Montessori's great vision of a *new education* into actual practice — to free the child to create the new higher level of maturity which is truly proper to the human personality.

Positions & Placements

Montessori Teachers: primary and toddler. For non-profit parent board school occupying three buildings in a country setting. Experience preferred. Contact: Cathy Billone, Brendon Montessori School, Rt. 55 and Rt. 82, LaGrangeville, NY 12540, tel. 914-223-3783; 914-227-5535 (fax) www.brendon-montessori.org

Maturity
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IMAC Speaks Out

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 1

Havis testified that the other agency failed to substantially comply with the applicable government criteria for recognition. He stated that "Department criteria require that a recognized agency have a purpose of obtaining federal funds. However, only a single institution has ever obtained any such funds through this other agency. Even then, the amount was extremely small, after a period of several years with no funds drawn out at all. Recognition of this other agency should therefore be withdrawn as having no proper purpose."

He also pointed out that the other agency was failing to meet Department criteria because of a serious conflict of interest in the composition and operation of its major decision-making body. Also noted were misleading representations to the general public, lack of consultation with IMAC, and absence of reliable and appropriate Montessori standards.

Following a staff presentation and discussion of these issues, the Advisory panel recommended to continue recognition of the other agency for a period of four more years — but only to the extent of two of its five review committees. It also recommended to require the agency to submit an interim report by May 13, 2000, demonstrating that it has fully addressed all the issues cited by the Department staff analysis.

After the hearing, Havis pledged to keep monitoring the other agency, and working to correct the problems of inappropriate recognition and regulation of Montessori education. He also reaffirmed that IMAC will continue to work in all ways possible to improve the accreditation and quality of teacher education throughout the entire Montessori community.

For more information on the matter of Montessori accreditation, contact: IMAC, 912 Thayer Ave., #207, Silver Spring, MD 20910 USA. Tel. (301) 589-1127

Montessori Conference in Montreal, Canada

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 3

to indirectly attract the unnormalized child towards some constructive activity in the present moment — a way of being that is a very positive and connected approach to the child."

Before the conference, Havis and Jeannette Kechichian met with **Noushig Eloyan**, a leading member of the Montreal City Council — to discuss the Society's concerns and interests in expanding the availability and quality of Montessori education in the region. The need for more substantial Montessori teacher education was given particular attention.

After the conference, Havis visited several nearby Montessori schools — to become better acquainted with the needs and interests of the local Montessori community. He stated that "the Society is committed to support and cooperate with the growing interests and development of Montessori education in Canada. I hope we can follow up this first successful conference with others in the future. Perhaps we can even establish a more permanent presence of Montessori teacher education in the region."

Trust Tutoring

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 3

In Spring, 1999, TRUST TUTORING extended its program operation to the state of California. **Debbie Amoroso** (Rialto, CA) has now been certified by TRUST TUTORING to administer the special "*Evaluation of Basic Skills*" testing — and to serve as the first regional director for TRUST TUTORING in the state. **Lee Havis**, overall program director, will use computer telecommunications technology from his office near Washington, DC to provide the necessary long-distance support for program operation in California and elsewhere outside the mid-Atlantic area.

Havis noted that "our program helps children overcome many problems encountered in the traditional school classroom — by providing a structured plan of study that supports regular daily study and learning in the subject areas at issue. It brings Montessori principles to bear in a diversity of situations which touch the lives of many teachers, school officials and parents involved with the students in our program. In California, we will demonstrate our ability to successfully operate at a considerable distance from our main offices — without sacrificing quality or our commitment to Montessori principles."

TRUST TUTORING is sponsored by the *International Montessori Trust* and employs a study skill approach and special evaluation testing in every situation. The testing materials may be purchased separately from TRUST TUTORING. For more information, contact: TRUST TUTORING, 912 Thayer Ave. #205, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, USA. Tel. (301) 589-0733.

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The Montessori OBSERVER

INSTINCT

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Participants in the Society's Montessori conference held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia — July 17-18, 1999

Creating the New Education in Asia

Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia — July 17-18, 1999

"A new Asia is in the course of building while the old one slowly disintegrates."
Dr. Maria Montessori — *from To Educate the Human Potential, p.28*

On July 17-18, 1999, the Society conducted its first "*Creating the New Education*" conference on the continent of Asia. Held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, it was attended by parents, teachers and school owners from Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Lee Havis led the conference discussion to show how to effectively apply Montessori principles in various problem situations with children. Many specific examples, exercises and role-play scenarios were used in the process of this discussion — to afford greater understanding and emphasis in the learning process.

Havis pointed out how certain "rules of thumb" could be identified and used to help guide our efforts in applying Montessori principles. He stated that "even though our ultimate commitment must be to such fundamental principles as 'observation' and 'individual liberty', we can still improve our efforts at Montessori teaching by following some basic rules like 'never interrupt a child involved in concentrated work activity'." After the conference, Havis wrote up a summary of some of the most useful "rules of thumb", and distributed it to all participants.

The conference also gave some considerable attention to how adult "dependency" in children can be controlled through such means as questioning and eye contact. He noted that "when we are tempted to answer a child's question directly, we should instead reflect back or question the child on the problem presented. In this way, the child learns to think more independently for its own resolution to the problem, while the adult still maintains a supportive, positive engagement in the situation."

After the conference, Havis visited several schools that had staff attending the conference — to observe and assist their efforts at implementing the learning experiences of the conference. He particularly noticed the excellent observational skills that were being employed with the children.

Havis stated that the success of this first Asian Montessori conference may well lead to further teacher education and conference events in the region. He noted interest in further conferences in Singapore, Philippines and Australia, and again in Malaysia. He also indicated the possibility of conducting a Montessori workshop for teachers in China.

TRUST TUTORING Trains New Regional Directors

The *International Montessori Trust* (**Lee Havis**, trustee), continues to apply Montessori principles with its operation of TRUST TUTORING in the United States. This program of in-home tutoring is now training new regional directors to expand its operation in Richmond, VA, Atlanta, GA, Baltimore, MD and Rialto, CA.

Regional directors set up contracts with clients, evaluate students and supervise the tutors who directly implement the unique TRUST TUTORING program. These supervisory personnel become qualified for this challenging work through a series of audio tapes which are coordinated with questionnaires and a special Handbook of forms and procedures.

Regional directors are now also being required to become certified to administer the TRUST TUTORING "*Evaluation of Basic skills*" test, which is ordinarily conducted with students as part of their initial evaluation. In addition, they must successfully write-up a sample "addendum agreement" for tutors and "progress summary report", based on a realistic practical situation. These are two of the key documents that regional directors must prepare as part of their supervisory work in each assignment.

For further information about TRUST TUTORING, contact their main offices at (301) 589-0733.

MONTESSORI CONFERENCE

Creating the New Education
Inner Preparation for Montessori teaching

Washington, DC
November 6-7, 1999
Register by October 6, 1999
$160/member *$200/regular*

For full cost and registration details, contact: IMS, 912 Thayer Ave., #207, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Tel. (301) 589-1127.

INSTINCT

by Lee Havis

"...instinct...is the source of true progress in civilization, for men have a natural instinct to work."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Secret of Childhood****, p.187*

Dr. Montessori believed that natural instincts lead us to work for our own self-perfection in harmony with the ultimate progress of all mankind. She particularly noticed these instincts at work in the young child — bringing about such normal qualities as precocious intelligence, spontaneous self-discipline, independence, order and complete harmony with others. In the Montessori environment, we can see these qualities today in the "*normalized*" child which arises from a mysterious inner force of nature.

Mysterious Inner Force

"Man is ... urged by a mysterious inner force to the attainment of our ideal determined form."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***To Ed. the Hum. Potential****, p.78*

Montessori teaching allows the child's own instincts to guide its basic education according to an unerring inner force of nature. This mysterious "teacher within" the child seems to direct its normal outward action to pursue certain fundamental tendencies; i.e., to explore the environment, protect its physical survival and express its own unique being in harmony with the total interrelated functioning of all. Modern society has, however, largely overlooked these fundamental tendencies, and suppressed those parental instincts that would otherwise so effectively support the emergence of the child's true *normalized* nature.

Suppressed Instincts

"...we live in a highly artificial civilization, in which the natural instincts with which nature has endowed the mother are largely suppressed."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Ed. for a New World****, p.19*

Although parents naturally desire to love their children, these instincts have been largely suppressed by society's long-established prejudices and limited vision about the fundamental nature of man. Ordinary teaching reflects this prevailing prejudicial mind-set, by seeking to control and manipulate the child on the assumption of its being essentially bad or devoid of any inner guidance. Of course, the child's vital instincts for normal self-directed learning cannot be realized in such a repressive educational environment.

Vital Instincts

"...the mind was looked on as superior to the vital instincts, to be impressed and trained from without."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Ed. for a New World****, p.45*

Traditional education emphasizes teacher-controlled curriculum to achieve some limited academic content knowledge. With this approach, the child's vital instincts to develop its own individual needs and interests are essentially ignored and disregarded by a mass of rigid rules, schedules and group instruction — a repressive, controlling system which is enforced by a complex web of rewards and punishments. The ordinary child can therefore not freely express its natural instinct of love and obedience to adult authority.

Obedience

"A child readily obeys an adult. But when an adult asks him to renounce those instincts that form his development, he cannot obey."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Secret of Childhood****, p.104*

Children can only normally obey an adult authority which follows such natural laws as (1) "*Observation*", (2) "*Individual Liberty*" and (3) "*Preparation of the Environment*". This true natural obedience will eventually emerge in the child as we apply these three basic Montessori principles to "*control the environment, not the child*". Such Montessori teaching is particularly important with the child under six, when its whole personality is being built up through the operation of certain powerful, but temporary instincts.

Temporary Instincts

"...a child's psychic development does not take place by chance...it does not originate in the external stimuli but is guided by transient sensibilities, that is, by temporary instincts intimately connected with the acquisition of specific traits."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Secret of Childhood****, p.42*

The young child has certain important temporary instincts which guide its basic personality development in early childhood. During this formative period, the child's uniquely "*absorbent mind*" will take the environment within itself through a process of effortless, spontaneous learning — establishing within the child such basic faculties as order, language and culture. A powerful instinct of imitation is at work in the child during this period — modeling the essential behavioral patterns and culture that are presented by the surrounding adults.

Instinct of Imitation

"Nature does not merely give the instinct for imitation, but the effort in oneself to become transformed into whatever the example demonstrates."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Ed. for a New World****, p. 45*

The very young child instinctively imitates the behavior and language of others. Parents and teachers must therefore carefully control their personality expression with young children — to serve as an effective model of proper cultural values and polite social grace and courtesy. The instinct to coordinate is also evident during early childhood, to bring the child's physical movements into intimate harmony with its intellectual development and inner mental order.

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 2

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Lee Havis, Executive Director

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Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

ADULT CONTROL

When other adults in the classroom are not consistently following Montessori principles (**see *Observer*, *May, 1999***), the Montessori teacher must control the detrimental influence of the "*adult personality*" in the environment. The behavior of all adults in the environment must be under the authority of the teacher who is committed to applying the approach of "*control the environment, not the child*".

Even though the assistant says she is willing to listen and learn proper Montessori teaching techniques, her actions show a lack of compliance that has not been resolved by mere verbal admonition, instruction and discussion. The teacher must therefore set in motion a more robust form of control of this disruptive element in the children's environment.

The teacher might begin a greater control in this situation by directing the assistant to simply sit down in a chair and passively observe the classroom for a while — perhaps taking notes about what she observes in the teacher's behavior and in her interaction with the children. In this way, the teacher is giving a lesson to the assistant on proper Montessori teaching skills in practice. Following this observation exercise, the teacher and assistant may then discuss what was observed, and clarify any particular details that need attention or emphasis.

In time, the assistant may be permitted more active interaction with the children — but only according to the teacher's specific guidance and direction. The combination of observation and practice with children should considerably advance the "*inner preparation*" of the assistant, and gradually assure her more consistent application of Montessori principles in the environment.

Multiple Scenarios

A new Montessori has just taken over a classroom which has been in disorder a long time, under the influence of considerable traditional teaching. When the new teacher calls the children together, only several children comply — the others continuing a general pattern of distraction to various forms of fantasy. While the teacher offers a group lesson on practical life routines, there is little attention, and multiple scenarios of misbehavior break out around the room. What to do?

*Answer in **Observer**, November, 1999*

INSTINCT

Cont'd. from Page 2, Col. 3

Instinct to Coordinate

"The child has an instinct to coordinate his movements and to bring them under control."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Absorbent Mind**, p.180*

From the moment of birth, the child instinctively exercises its body and mind to coordinate their various separate faculties into a single integrated whole. The young child will therefore engage in many types of coordinating activity which bring about its unitary purpose and personality development. Such an instinct to coordinate will also express itself as an irresistible urge to handle objects in a thoughtful, intelligent manner — to directly experience the diverse attributes of physical objects through the sense of touch.

Irresistible Urge

"...the child shows an irresistible urge to touch everything....His intelligence needs a world of things which provide him with motives for his activity."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Absorbent Mind**, p.104*

The normal child has an irresistible urge to touch — to directly experience the various qualities of size, texture, shape and function that pertain to physical reality. Montessori teaching must therefore provide a neat and orderly arrangement of physical objects — a prepared physical environment for the child to experiment with and handle such objects according to its own individual needs and interests of the moment. This thoughtful manipulative work leads the child to a fundamental mastery and control of itself — following its first instinct towards independent activity which is active in all children from the moment of birth.

First Instinct

"The child's first instinct is to carry out his actions by himself, without anyone helping him."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Absorbent Mind**, p.90-91*

The ordinary infant enters into a complex world of considerable confusion and disorder — a mass of chaos that it must overcome through an inborn instinct for independent action. This first instinct will normally lead the young child towards a moment of profound, prolonged concentration on some particular object of interest — the event that Dr. Montessori referred to as "*normalization*". Therafter, the child employs a natural instinctiveness that guides its actions for successful learning throughout life.

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 3

SOFTWARE REVIEW

MONTESSORI MANIPULATIVES

Sensorial Lesson #1

by Display School, Huntsville, AL, 1999

A new type of computer software is now available from *Display School* — showing Montessori manipulative equipment for use by children, parents and teachers. The first of their series of CD's is called "*Sensorial Lesson #1*", and features the introduction and use of four common pieces of sensorial equipment: Pink Tower, Knobbed Cylinders, Color Box III and Sound Cylinders. **Charles Martin**, president and CEO of *Display School* states that further CD's will be offered in the near future which feature other Montessori equipment.

This first *Display School* CD employs a simple user-friendly screen that prompts the viewer to choose from among several options: (1) "work the activity" (using common mouse clicks and the drag/drop function; a friendly prompt of "well done" when activity in completed), (2) learn "about the activity" (written instructions with audio in English, German, French or Spanish), and (3) "watch a movie" showing basic use of equipment with English voice over description. These options offer an interesting range of learning opportunities and experience with the materials.

The young child can learn basic computer use in the interesting context of manipulating *virtual* materials — and parents and teachers can become acquainted with their use and presentation in a very easy and convenient manner. This virtual presentation and manipulation of Montessori equipment is certainly a useful opportunity for learning when the full physical reality is not readily available.

Although the overall technical quality is quite excellent, I hope that certain minor defects of sound and color quality in the demonstration copy reviewed here will be corrected in the later market versions. **Kay Anderson**, Montessori consultant for this product, has demonstrated her considerable expertise and knowledge in rendering the various presentations. To the *Display School* team, I say "well done".

The price is quite reasonable at $29.95 plus $3.95 shipping and handling.

For more information, contact:
Display School, 2600 Newby Rd., Suite D, Huntsville, AL 35805-4273, Tel. (256) 533-9282,
email: support@apochtech.com
url: http://www.apochtech.com/displayschool.htm

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September, 1999
Vol. XX, No. 3
instinct

Proceedings of the Society's Montessori conference — Louisville, Kentucky (May 22-23, 1999)

Montessori Conference in Louisville, Kentucky

"The first step to take in order to become a Montessori teacher is to shed omnipotence and to become a joyous observer..."

Dr. Maria Montessori — *from* ***To Educate the Human Potential****, p.121-22*

The Society held a 2-day weekend Montessori conference on May 22-23, 1999 in Louisville, Kentucky. Attending were parents, teachers and school owners from Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia, Michigan and Georgia.

Lee Havis IMS executive director, led the conference discussion into a journey of discovering and experiencing 'what is '*Montessori*"'. He employed many dramatic exercises, role-playing scenarios and visualization techniques to highlight the various delicate features of Montessori teaching with children.

The conference particularly emphasized the process nature of Montessori teaching — to recognize the value of making even small, imperfect steps in the right direction of "*controlling the environment, not the child*". Havis stated that "when we get into action with these small beginning steps, we find encouragement, support and inspiration to continue to proceed further. Then, it becomes possible to take stronger steps later on, as we gain confidence in the direction of positive changes in our behavior with children."

The Louisville conference was recorded on audio tape, and an edited version is now being prepared for sale to the general public. Havis stated that "I hope this newest conference tape will help expand the value of such good *inner preparation* work that took place in this unique Montessori conference. Although the tapes can certainly not replace the dynamic experience of being at a conference itself, I believe they will still help support and expand the outreach of this work to many parents and teachers who have never attended this exciting conference experience — to encourage their efforts to try out this '*new education*' for themselves."

INSTINCT

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 2

Instinctiveness

"...instinctiveness in children is a kind of inspiration which leads them to self-constructive work."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from Absorbent Mind, p.181

The *normalized* child has a quality of instinctiveness that helps it overcome many perils that otherwise significantly oppose its fundamental progress towards a new and better future. Such instincts for normal being are within ourselves as well — inspiring and encouraging us to face and overcome the many obstacles to our mastery of the environment and success with others in society. We must therefore discover and employ these inner instincts if we are to effectively pursue the critical work of creating Dr. Montessori's vision of a *new education* in the world.

Montessori Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Comments from Participants:

"It was a great experience in KL...words can never describe the conference and its benefits...a total success."

Sharmila Suthesh *(Singapore)*

"It was 2 days very well spent...a time of self-discovery...I am so glad I had the opportunity to attend..."

Roelie Murphy *(Brisbane, Australia)*

"...thank you for the invaluable experience of the conference. It was a very enlightening and mind opening experience."

Ajit Chawla *(Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)*

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The Montessori OBSERVER LAWS

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Donald E. Seymour Joins IMS Advisory Board

The IMS Advisory Board will now include the participation of **Donald E. Seymour**, former business executive, inventor and author of *"The Key to Your Unknown Talent"*. Mr. Seymour joins Elizabeth Hainstock, Dr. Orin Cornett, and John Bradshaw on this board which seeks to expand association of IMS and Montessori education with other related fields in society.

During his long and prominent business career, Mr. Seymour started numerous successful companies and has supported many civic and business organizations, including the *Wisconsin Small Business Association*, which he founded. In 1987, Mr. Seymour set up and funded the *Vocational Guidance institute*, to research healthful careers, learning and talent. The holder of three chemical patents, Mr. Seymour has lectured extensively on building companies, life planning and natural talent capabilities.

In retirement, he continues to research talent discovery and the field of career guidance. In 1996, he published *"The Key to Your Unknown Talent"*, introducing the new science of Talent Discovery. He references Dr. Montessori's work in this book, and plans to expand this relationship in his future publications.

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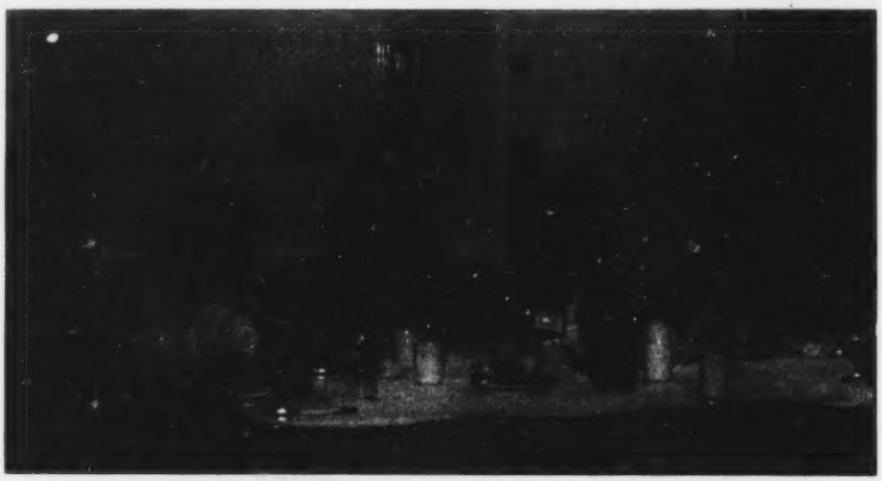
Donald E. Seymour, new member of IMS Advisory Board



Proceedings of IMS Montessori conference in Washington, DC — November 6-7, 1999

Creating the New Education in Washington, DC

On November 6-7, 1999, the Society conducted its latest *"Creating the New Education"* conference in the Washington, DC area. Participating were teachers, parents and other educators from Maryland, Washington, DC, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Texas, New Hampshire and Canada.

As always, this two-day weekend experience provided inner preparation for Montessori teaching — to show how to effectively "control the environment, not the child" to assure the emergence of the child's true "normalized" nature. **Lee Havis**, IMS executive director, led the group discussion, using various examples, role-play drama scenarios, observation exercises and analysis of common problem situations with children. He stated that "the role play acting out is particularly helpful to visualize our unknown errors, and to see how to make the necessary corrections."

The discussion focused particular attention on controlling the adult personality in circumstances of fantasy and in giving lesson presentations of materials to children. Havis offered certain "rules of thumb" to help the participants work out and resolve the various personality issues of dependency, negativity and abandonment that tend to persist in the adult's ordinary relationship with children.

Havis also used specific Montessori materials to demonstrate the basic procedures in giving an initial lesson presentation. Emphasizing the very brief and simple nature of such lessons, he said that "a traditional full detail presentation would tend to bring too much attention to the adult personality. It would distract the child's attention away from the materials themselves and might also lead the child to lose interest in the materials altogether. Also, it would discourage the child's natural interest to freely explore and experiment with the materials as is most desirable for normal development."

Havis indicated that the Society will schedule further "*Creating the New Education*" conferences based on local interest. He invited interested persons to contact the Society directly to express their interest, and to suggest any preference for a specific date and location.

LESSON PRESENTATIONS

"The instruction of the teacher consists then merely in a hint, a touch — enough to give a start to the child. The rest develops of itself."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook, p.58-59

LAWS

by Lee Havis

"...the problems of education must be solved on the basis of the laws of cosmic order...Only when we hold to these can we judge and modify the multitude of human laws which deal with the passing moments of external social construction.."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Formation of Man**, p.11-14*

Montessori teaching follows fundamental laws of nature with children — basic principles of life that may be generally associated with such terms as (1) "Observation", (2) "Individual Liberty" and (3) "Preparation of the Environment". As we apply these powerful Montessori principles with children, the child's true normal nature will arise with such qualities as spontaneous self-discipline, order, eager intellectual activity and complete harmony with others. This new *normalized* child clearly shows us the awesome beneficial results of following these insuperable laws of nature.

Insuperable Laws

"Life increases, becomes manifest, and perfects the individual, but it is confined within certain limits and is governed by insuperable laws."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Discovery of the Child**, p.61-62*

Laws of nature direct all life to evolve the cosmos as a total interrelated functioning of the whole. However, since we can only apply such insuperable laws as "observation" with a very limited understanding, we must constantly enlarge their meaning in a process of inner preparation and study. Ordinary education, however, does not engage in this type of inner preparation, but follows instead a superficial human logic directed to only the most conventional beliefs and prejudices about the child in society.

Human Logic

"...the pedagogic world is guided by human logic, but nature has other laws."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Ed. for a New World**, p.53*

Conventional education views the child as being essentially weak, fanciful and unguided from within. Therefore, teaching tends to apply a human logic that seeks only to achieve the child's obedience and dependence on external adult authority. The child must accordingly divert from its own self-directed path of learning through natural laws — to comply instead with whatever may be the desires and interests of the controlling adult personality.

Adult Desires and Interests

"The end of education was to subject the child to an adult, who substituted himself for nature and replaced the laws of life with his own desires and interests."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Secret of Childhood**, p.212*

Traditional teaching centers on a predetermined curriculum that is uniformly imposed on all children through various forms of adult manipulation, control and repression. The child must therefore follow the desires and interests of the adult, rather than its own individual plan of creation. Such a repressive educational approach is built on common prejudice in society that must necessarily divert the child from its own normal development in harmony with basic laws of nature.

Common Prejudice

"...one of the most imminent perils is that of going against nature's law in the education of a child, to suffocate him under the error of common prejudice."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Formation of Man**, p.66*

Common prejudice leads the teacher to consider as insignificant or non-existent the child's own true needs and interests for self-directed learning — requiring the child instead to follow whatever may be the adult's own program of specific curriculum and subject matter for the child. Traditional teaching then aims to control and correct the learning process through such means as grades, tests and group instruction. Many teachers also set up irrational classroom rules to attempt to teach morality, character and goodness — to coerce children to fit within a uniform system of presumed fairness for the common good of all.

Irrational Rules

"...the kind of education still in vogue condemns the teacher to be a dictator...teachers of the older school hold firmly to irrational rules and have little to guide them but illusion and prejudice."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Absorbent Mind**, p.256*

Rules for young children set up a very irrational type of justice that the teacher must necessarily enforce and interpret according to her own particular views and opinions. Since the young child's mind is not yet capable of mature reasoning on its own, such rules impose a detrimental influence of the adult personality. By contrast, Montessori education has a lack of rules, which offers instead a more fundamental form of justice according to a commitment to basic laws of nature.

Lack of Rules

"Lack of ...rules furnished a basic nothing, and because of that nothingness, the soul was able to expand."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Ed. for a New World**, p. 55*

Montessori teaching replaces the customary classroom rules with a commitment to such fundamental principles as "*individual liberty*". However, this lack of rules does not mean that children are abandoned without the necessary modeling of the adult in matters of proper grace and courtesy. Indeed, the principle of "*preparation of the environment*" is one of the laws of nature that Montessori teachers follow to engage with the child in

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Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

Multiple Scenarios

The new Montessori teacher here is faced with multiple scenarios of misbehavior around the room (**see *Observer*, *September 1999***). She is frustrated and distracted by so much noise and confusion, that she doesn't know how or where to begin to apply the approach of "control the environment, not the child".

The teacher in this *moment of peril* must begin her analysis with a consideration of what is most critical to resolve first for the well-being of the total environment — an important rule of thumb that allows the teacher to proceed thereafter with greater calm, certainty and focused application of Montessori principles. Following this rule of thumb, she must judge which scenario is of greatest potential detriment to the well being of all; i.e., from the extreme danger of violent physical harm to a child to the relatively low priority issue of quiet fantasy.

Once this initial judgment is made, a further rule of thumb can be applied — to intervene to the least extent possible to achieve a satisfactory result. This means to use "eye contact" alone as a first choice, if possible, and only in extreme situations to use physical means such as touching a child or some specific object in the environment.

As the most disruptive scenarios are resolved in the room, the teacher can then turn her attention to those that are less troublesome — to ultimately resolve even the relatively minor misbehavior issues associated with quiet fantasy. In this way, the entire classroom will gradually return to a calm and peaceful state of order and harmony, as the children respond in a more normalized manner with the environment.

Lesson Presentation Procedures

The teacher has noticed that children in her class seem only briefly interested in working on materials on their own — and are constantly asking for help from her in a very dependent manner. However, when she begins to show the full detailed presentation of a particular piece of equipment, the children often look away and seem to lack interest to follow up the work with concentration on their own. The teacher therefore wonders what mistake she may be making with her lesson presentation procedures. *What to do?*

*Answer in **Observer**, March, 2000*

Children working in a bi-lingual classroom of the Centre Prescholaire Montessori in LaSalle, Canada

French-English Montessori School in LaSalle, Canada

The *Centre Prescholaire Montessori* in LaSalle, Canada offers a bi-lingual program for children in the predominantly French-speaking province of Quebec. This Montessori school near Montreal was started in 1960. **Anne Mansour**, the current owner and director, expanded the school in 1980 to now include two locations, with a total enrollment of about 175 children from ages 2-6.

The main school campus has a specially designed building with mezzanine level central office that has viewing windows into each surrounding classroom. When Lee Havis, IMS director, visited the school in April 1999, he noted the building's particular suitability for operating a Montessori educational program.

The school's bi-lingual feature is implemented by having both English and French speaking teachers in each classroom. The children are therefore introduced to both languages in the natural flow of interaction between children and teachers throughout the day. Each room has separate French and English language materials, so that the children may choose and learn according to their own particular needs and interests of the moment. Ms. Mansour says that this approach works well for the children who normally acquire both languages without undue difficulty or confusion.

While attending the IMS conference in Washington, DC in November 1999, Ms. Mansour commented on the great interest in Montessori education among the French speaking people of Canada. She also expressed the need for more effective Montessori teacher education in the French language — offering her support to cooperate with these efforts in the future.

For further information, contact: Anne Mansour, Centre Prescholaire Montessori, 1505 Serre, LaSalle, Quebec H8N 1N3, Canada. Tel. (514) 363-6603.

Positions & Placements

Teacher sought by Montessori elementary school in Sunnyvale, CA. Must have Bachelor's degree and some teaching experience and Montessori training. Respond to: HR Dept., Rainbow Montessori, 790 E. Duane Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94086

LAWS

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many positive ways — to give lessons and otherwise support the child's many needs and interests for goal-directed activity in the environment.

Laws of Nature

"Education must be reconstructed and based on the laws of nature and not on the preconceived notions and prejudices of adult society."

Dr. Maria Montessori
*from **Formation of Man**, p.97*

Montessori teaching follows laws of nature that require many exacting forms of adult behavior and procedures with children; e.g., to remove any detrimental influences from around the child in question. We must particularly work to control the detrimental influence of the adult personality in the child's environment — to check our ordinary tendencies to interrupt, manipulate or repress the child under the guise of "help" or "teaching". In this way, Montessori teaching allows the

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LAWS — *Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 3*

young child to express a form of love for its environment that is evident in many forms of concentrated activity with physical objects.

Form of Love

"Every work which is done according to the laws of nature...attains consciousness under a form of love."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Secret of Childhood****, p.103*

The young child expresses a deep form of love toward its environment — a strong desire and interest to explore and interact with the environment in a concentrated, orderly manner. The young child is naturally eager to learn, and is therefore attracted to intellectual activity that will build up its entire essential personality for life. As adults, we can only observe the outward effects of the child's instinctive love for work — a self-creative process that comes from mysterious guiding principles within the child itself.

Mysterious Guiding Principles

"...a new being...contains within itself mysterious guiding principles which will be the source of its work, character and adaptation to its surroundings."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Secret of Childhood****, p.19*

The child follows mysterious guiding principles to engage in many types of constructive self-directed activity in the environment. The child seeks to intimately adapt to its surroundings with a natural quality of harmony, joy and order with others. The emergence of this new *normalized* child is the beginning of a whole new world full of miracles that promises to establish fundamental laws of nature as the basis for a new and better society.

World Full of Miracles

"...laws and treaties are not enough. What we need is a world full of miracles...A new world for a new man."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from ***Peace and Education****, p.44*

While we must certainly deal with the existing laws of our present social order, our first and overriding concern is better directed to discover and use the fundamental laws of nature with children. Then we can begin to see the reality of Dr. Montessori's vision of a *new education* — the hope for a new world full of the many miracles of the *normalized* child. We are creating this *new education* each day as we follow and apply infinite and eternal laws of nature with children.

DONALD E. SEYMOUR

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 1

Lee Havis, IMS executive director, stated that "Mr. Seymour is a valuable addition to our board. His work in talent discovery is closely related to Montessori education, and I hope this relationship will expand even further through his closer participation on the IMS advisory board.

Mr. Seymour resides in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A copy of his book *"The Key to Your Unknown Talent"* and other information about his work may be obtained by direct contact to: Talent Discovery Press, 3900 West Brown Deer Rd., Suite #A-110, Milwaukee, WI 53217, Tel. 414-228-1266.

Child in foreground is working with cards and counters of the Montessori math materials. In background is pink tower work. ***Centre Prescholaire Montessori (LaSalle, Canada)***

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